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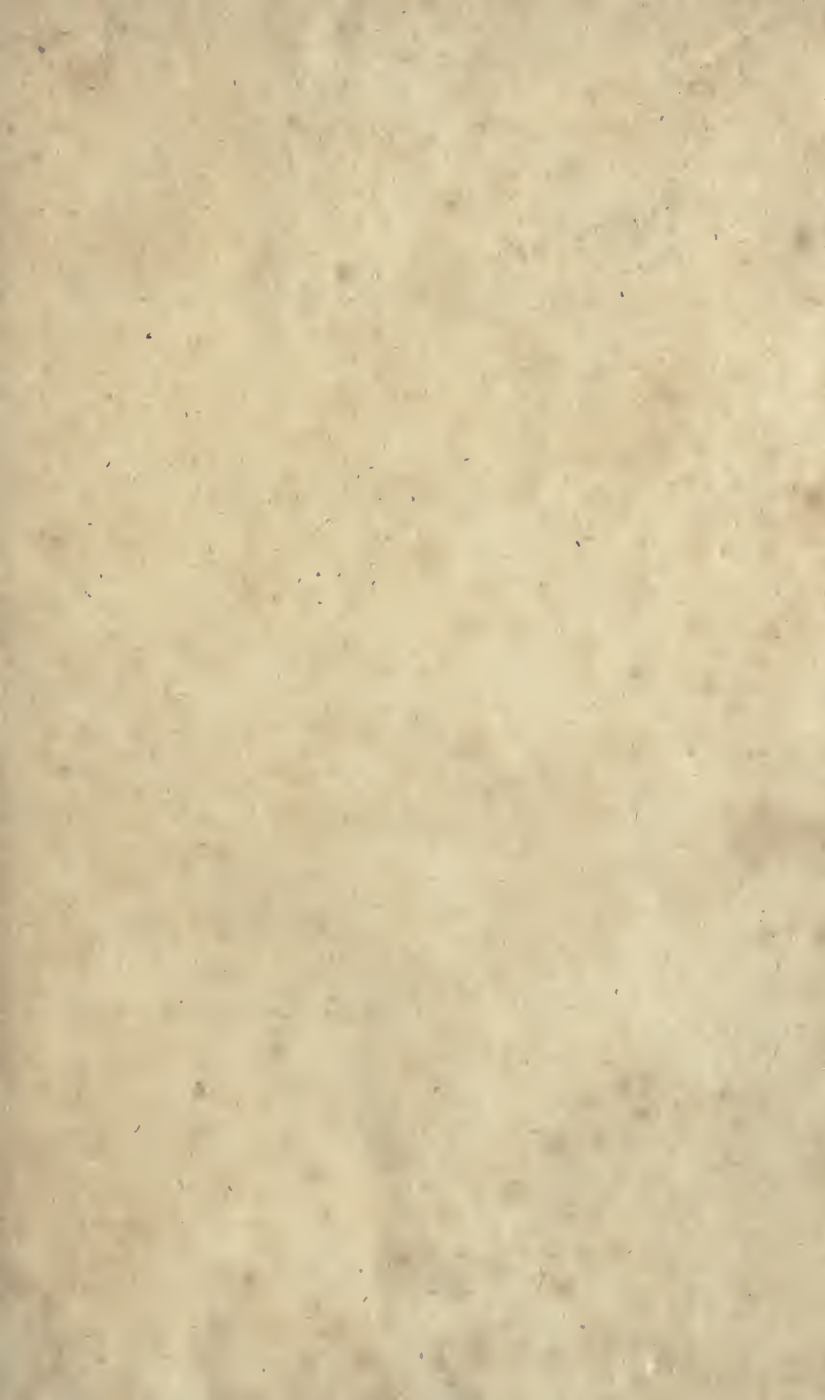
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PLAN
OF THE
FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY
F. V. REINHARD, S. T. D.
Court Preacher at Dresden.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIFTH GERMAN EDITION,

BY
OLIVER A. TAYLOR, A. M.
Resident Licentiate, Theological Seminary, Andover.



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The work here presented to the public, is the production of F. V. Reinhard, a native of Vohenstrauss a market town in the Dukedom of Sulzbach, for some time *Professor Ordinarius* of Theology at Wittenberg, and finally Court Preacher with the honorary title of *Oberconsistorialassessor* at Dresden, where he died in 1812, in the 59th year of his age. His father was a pious and worthy clergyman of the place where he was born, and the first and principal instructor of his youth. Of course, the education which he received was strictly of an Evangelical cast, and, through the blessing of God, was a principal means of preserving him from continuance in the errors of skepticism into which he afterwards fell, and of rendering him the useful man in the cause of religion which he ultimately became. He was the most eloquent scholar of his age and the author of several works and about thirty volumes of sermons, all distinguished for a flowing style, lucid order, and clearness and fullness of thought. Of his works, the following is not the least conspicuous. The object which he had in view in composing it and the circumstances which first called it forth, are, in a few words, clearly stated in the introduction and the appendix, A and F. Still it may be interesting to some to have a more particular account of them. Protestant Germany, which had long been comparatively free from anti-christian writers, while England and France were deluged with them, had now begun to experience a reverse in this respect. J. C. Edelmann a native of Weissenfels, having passed through various seceding sects of the Evangelical church, then tried Atheism, and finally taken up with Pan-

theism, a man of some talent but few acquisitions, had died a few years previous in banishment, for his open and audacious attacks upon the church. To him succeeded Reimarus a native of Hamburg, where he was born in 1694, a thorough philologist, one of the ablest critics of his age, and the author of various productions, some of them of high repute. In 1758, he published an able work, entitled: "Logic containing directions for the right use of reason in the acquisition of truth; drawn from the two natural rules of agreement and disagreement."* Of some of the directions which he laid down in this work, he afterwards made extensive use for the purpose of opposing revealed religion. It was far from his intention however to *publish* any thing of an anti-christian character, and consequently his writings were confined to his confidential friends, and left behind in manuscript at his death, which occurred at Hamburg in 1765, at which time, he was Professor of Hebrew and Mathematics at the Gymnasium in that place. Of these anti-christian manuscripts, Lessing, who is well known both as a scholar and a poet, contrived to get a copy, parts of which he published at Brunswick in a work, entitled: "Contributions to history and literature drawn from the archives of the ducal library at Wolfenbützel,"† of which he was then overseer, under the name of "Wolfenbützel Fragments, by an anonymous person."‡ Five of these fragments made their appearance in 1777, and a sixth, in 1778. They all excited great attention and called forth corresponding answers. The last however was particularly inimical to Christianity and calculated to injure the cause of truth, and of course, deserved more particular attention. It was entitled: "Fragment respecting the object of Jesus and his disciples."§ In it the author generally extolls the morality of

*Die Vernunftlehre, als eine Anweisung zum richtigen Gebrauche der Vernunft in dem Erkenntniss der Wahrheit, aus zwei ganz natürlichen Regeln der Einstimmung und des Widerspruchs hergeleitet, 2te A., 1758. 8.

† Beyträge zur Geschichte und Litteratur, aus den Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbützel u. s. w.

‡ Wolfenbützelsche Fragmente eines Ungenannten.

§ Fragment von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger.

the Gospel as noble, but he says that Jesus and his apostles were deceivers, and maintains that the former was not the author of the mysterious doctrines afterwards imputed to him, and that he never had any intention of abolishing the moral, Levitical law, inasmuch as he expressly asserts that he came not to abrogate the law and the prophets but to see them fulfilled; and hence, that it was his intention merely to establish an earthly kingdom among the Jews. He says that his disciples expected nothing else from him during his life time, and that it was not until after his death that they changed their opinion and imputed to him other intentions, which led them in many instances to give a different representation of things from what they would have done had they written their narratives before this event, so that their accounts are not to be depended upon; that he and John deceived the people, as, without correcting the false notions of the Jews or contradicting them, he gave himself out for the Messiah, and consequently for a worldly prince, and John asserts that he was first made acquainted with Jesus as the Messiah by revelation at his baptism, though he had extolled him as the Messiah before, and hence there must have been some contrivance between them; that Jesus under the cloak of religion had formed the plan of a rebellion, of founding a kingdom of God and establishing a royal government upon the ruins of the Jewish state; that though he forbade his disciples from making known his deeds, it was for the purpose of maturing his plan, and because the time and circumstances had not arrived for him to claim the authority of king; that at the feast of the passover, when the time had arrived as he thought, he actually made a solemn entrance into Jerusalem, accompanied with the acclamations of the people, went into the temple and formed an estimate of the means of defence there collected together, and the next day, delivered an inflammatory address to the people for the purpose of exciting them against the magistracy and inducing them to aid him in obtaining the chief authority, but all without success, for the people left him; and as there was danger of his producing more disturbance in the state, he was taken and crucified; and that while on the cross, he gave himself up to devotion; and that the exclamation which he uttered on that

occasion : " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" evinces his disappointment and shows that he had had the establishment of an earthly kingdom in view. Such is an outline of this fragment, the principal work which called Reinhard into the field. He made his appearance at first merely in an academical address in Latin, and had no thoughts of extending his investigations, until he was induced to do so, by the multiplied calls of his friends ; the result of which was the publication of the first edition of the following work in the German language, in 1781, entitled : " An examination of the plan devised by the founder of Christianity for the good of mankind. A contribution to the evidences of this religion."*

To the W. F. however succeeded a great variety of other infidel writers, who adopted the maxims of the French Terrorists and did their utmost to overthrow Christianity, among whom were C. E. Wünsch, K. F. Bahrdt, J. Mauvillon, and L. Paalzow. Of these, Paalzow was far the most fertile and bitter. Bahrdt however, who, after having run hastily through various systems, finally took up with Naturalism, though the less learned, was far the most popular and dangerous. He published several infidel works, especially, " Popular or familiar letters respecting the Bible," and " Letters respecting the execution of Christ's plan, to the inquirer after truth,"† the object of which, was, to annihilate all faith in the divinity of Christianity: Accordingly, he called all the miracles and prophecies of the Bible in question; by a shallow course of reasoning, endeavored to show the futility of supposing that God ever made a revelation to man ; and, in order to be able to give a natural explanation of every thing relative to Christ and Christianity, he invented fables respecting the manner in which Jesus obtained his early education and imputed to him the formation of a secret society for the promulgation

* Versuch über den Plan welchen der Stifter der christlichen Religion zum Besten der Menschen entwarf. Ein Beytrag zu den Beweisen für die Wahrheit dieser Religion.

† Briefe über die Bibel, im Volkstone, and Ausführung des Planes und Zweckes Jesu. In Briefen an Wahrheit suchende Leser, 12 Bändchen, Berlin, 1784—1793.

of his doctrines, and sought to force his hypotheses upon the world as history, though supported by no data whatever.* As several editions of Reinhard's work were called for, he paid more or less attention to some one of these writers, by which means it was increased from a small, to quite a large volume. To give a historical view of it in this respect as well as to exhibit the spirit of the writer himself, I here present some extracts from the prefaces to each of the four editions. They are all printed in the last German edition, but are too long to be retained here in full. In the first, dated Aug. the 1st, 1781, after stating that he had been induced to engage in this work by the requests of his friends, he concludes with his characteristic modesty, thus: "The author hopes that these printed sheets, among the many thousands yearly published, at least, will not be considered as the only superfluous ones. Should he fairly succeed in exciting here and there in a noble soul, those feelings of reverence, gratitude and love towards the founder of Christianity with which he himself was filled when he penned these thoughts, how happy should he be, how highly rewarded!" In the preface to his second edition, dated Nov. the 1st, 1783, he says: "The additions and alterations which the new impression of this work has received, were in part required for completeness and precision, and in part rendered necessary by certain opinions which have lately been advanced respecting the life, character and views of Jesus Christ. They might easily have been increased, but it is unnecessary to conduct the reader through long and tiresome investigations in order to show him, that the views of the founder of Christianity were far exalted above all human schemes, and can be considered in no other light than as constituting a benevolent plan devised by the Deity himself for the good, for the happiness of our race. There is a short course, by which, without going a round-about way, where few are disposed to accompany us, the reader can be directed to that point of observation, from which this divine plan will appear in all its magnificence, spreading out before him in prospects transporting, and in consequences extensive and eternal. My

* Vid. Schröckh, Chr. K. G. seit der Reformation, 6er Theil, S. 108 ff. 273 ff., fortgesetzt von Tzschirner, 9er Th. S. 516 ff.

desires are fulfilled, my object attained, if this short work shall even by its brevity in any measure contribute towards leading my Christian brethren to this point of observation, and confirming them in that conviction of the truth of Christianity from which I derive the greatest happiness of my life." In the preface to the third, dated April the 27th, 1789, he says: "Perhaps it would have been as well, if the present impression of this work had been left as short as the second. It has received considerable additions however in the first part, especially by the inquiries into which I have entered respecting the means of which Jesus intended to avail himself for the execution of his plan. I sincerely hope that it may not have received additions thereby merely to the number of its pages. I was for a long time uncertain whether it would be worth while to say any thing respecting the opinion that Jesus intended to accomplish his purposes by the influence of secret associations, which has been advanced in several works now well known, since the appearance of the last edition. At length, however, I concluded in my own mind, that, at a time when it is so universally believed that truth delights to conceal itself in the obscurities of mystical alliances, it would be useful, and perhaps proper to show, how entirely different He thought upon the subject who came into the world that he might bear witness to the truth. *That* the surest way of finding genuine, fruitful, and heavenly wisdom, is by listening to Him and learning of Him, I have, after repeatedly meditating upon the divine purposes which He accomplished upon earth, lately become so thoroughly convinced, that I have nothing better to wish for any of my brethren in this world or importune God to grant them, than this experience." In the preface to the last edition edited by the author, dated April the 22d, 1798, he says: "The gradual enlargement of this little work, which now appears for the fourth time, was rendered necessary by the wants of the age. Since the appearance of the first edition in 1781, great and rapid changes have taken place in theological discussions, and one part and another of the present work has been questioned, denied, or misrepresented. Of course the author so long as he hoped for its usefulness could not neglect these changes. He has therefore been compelled to make great additions to it,

especially in this last impression, in which he has devoted more particular attention to the character of Christ's plan, than on any former occasion. The author believes he ought not to be immediately condemned for the prolixity into which he has been led by his efforts to give as much perspicuity and certainty as possible, to every point. None acquainted with what has been written during the last six or eight years, respecting the character and extent of the object of Jesus, can deem it superfluous for one to have endeavored with impartiality and without arbitrarily assuming a single principle, to determine what Jesus had particularly in view from the accounts of the Evangelists in our possession. The author has gone through with another examination of them for this express purpose with all the impartiality and attention of which he was capable, and in his representation of the plan of Jesus, he is not conscious of having taken a single position which he could not sustain by indubitable quotations from the Evangelists. Various other additions have been made, which are scattered throughout the body of the work. To the whole he has added a copious table of contents for the purpose of facilitating a general view." This was the last edition published during the author's life-time. A new edition, having long been called for in Germany, one was printed the last year at Wittemberg under the direction of Dr. H. L. Heubner, an Evangelical man, and Professor of Theology in that place, from whom also it received many valuable notes and a copious appendix, of which mention is made in his preface.*

Such is a short account of the origin, object and progress of the present work. From it, the reader may at first infer, that it is chiefly of a local character, and therefore hardly worth the perusal of any but those who wish to obtain a historical view of the religious controversy in Germany. Let such an one however read the parts already referred to, before he allows himself to come to such a conclusion. The work does indeed contain some things of a local character, especially in the appendix, which might perhaps have

* For more particular information respecting Reinhard, consult his *Geständnisse*, Tzschirner's *Briefe veranlasst durch Reinhard's Geständnisse*, and Böttiger's *Zeichnung von Reinhard*.

been dispensed with, had I felt authorized to make the omission, or willing to mar a book which now constitutes a beautiful whole. Had I done so, I am confident I should have received no thanks from the scholar. He however who examines it attentively will find far more of a general than a local character, especially in the body of the work. Reinhard seldom mentions an opponent by name, or singles him out so far, as to descend to minute criticism. His object is a general one ;—to ascertain who Jesus Christ is. For this purpose, he fixes his eyes upon the character and conduct of Jesus as exhibited in the Evangelists, and assuming the attitude of an unprejudiced inquirer after the truth, from this historical information endeavors to ascertain the object that Jesus had in view and the means by which he intended to accomplish it, and shows that he far excelled all the other benefactors of our race who had made their appearance before him, and evinced far greater strength of mind in the midst of the most unfavorable circumstances ; from which he infers, that Jesus was in an especial sense a teacher sent of God. Such being the object of Reinhard, it was of course, unnecessary for him to descend to minute criticism, or single out opponents. His several positions, being established, the whole class of objections at which he aimed fall at once to the ground, and the character of Jesus is presented to the world in divine colors, on an eminence far above every thing that is merely human. How far Reinhard has succeeded must be left for the reader to judge. His train of thought is new, and like a steady stream, flows on increasing to the end, filling the reader with new delight as he advances. The work is certainly a favorite one with Evangelical Christians in Germany, and has been the means there of accomplishing much good. “The newness of the object which the author has in view,” says Tzschirner in his continuation of Schröckh, “and the learning and acuteness which he displays in his investigations, as well as the clearness, nobleness, and impressiveness of his representations, have all conspired to procure for this work an extensive circulation and a powerful influence upon the age.” “It has,” says Böttiger, “been the means of confirming thousands in the truth of Christianity, and, not only on account of the internal strength and the conclusiveness

of the reasoning, but also the genuine, historical skill displayed in the invention and the arrangement of the points of comparison, as well as the newness of the results drawn from long established matters of fact, is considered as the best apology for Christianity that modern times has produced."

Those acquainted with the work in our own country, have also formed an exalted estimate of its worth, and long felt anxious to see it presented to the public in an English dress; and it was from a knowledge of their views in this respect, especially those of Prof. Stuart, that I was first led to think of translating it; and the fact, that every thing which throws additional light upon the Gospel and aids in reclaiming the wanderer, is of the utmost importance to the world, and must be, so long as a doubter remains, will, I hope, furnish a sufficient apology for my making the attempt. Few doubtless will appreciate the difficulties I have had to encounter in the progress of the undertaking. My object has been to present the author's meaning and spirit in *English* phraseology without any regard to his. That I have in part failed in some instances is to be expected. How far I have succeeded must be left for others to judge. Reinhard's style is clear, copious and flowing, and distinguished for simplicity and strength; but Ciceronian in its cast, thoroughly German, and often composed of long periods; and hence, of difficult construction in many cases for the translator. I have therefore often been obliged to make changes in the form of the sentences and the particular aspect of the idea, in doing which I have aimed at preserving the main current of thought. No other alterations have been made. Both the notes and the appendix are preserved as in the German, except that in regard to the former, I have sometimes referred to an English original instead of a translation, and occasionally added a remark of my own which is designated as such. I have also in the *body* of the work, inserted references to Heubner's appendix (which are Heubner's in other respects,) and for the sake of convenience, numbered the sections and added heads to the minor divisions. To those who have kindly aided in conducting the work through the press, and to the Rev. Professor Stuart for the counsel and encouragement which he has from

time to time afforded me, I here tender my grateful acknowledgements. That the fervent prayers of the author as well as those of his able German editor may be answered, and the work as it now is, made the means of directing some and strengthening others, is the earnest desire of the translator.

OLIVER A. TAYLOR.

Andover, Theol. Sem.
Sept. 6th 1831.

PREFACE

TO THE FIFTH GERMAN EDITION—BY DR. HEUBNER.

FIFTY years have elapsed since the first sketch of the following work made its appearance in a Latin treatise. (*Consilium bene merendi de universo humano genere ingenii supra hominem elati documentum. Prolusio, qua ad orat. auspic. Profess. Philosophiae extraord. Jul. 1780 publice recitandum invitat. F. V. R. 32 S. in 4to, printed in the Opusc. Acad. I. 234—267.*) The interest which this sketch excited, both on account of the genius and the historical knowledge which it displayed, induced the author to undertake its execution in German, four editions of which were published from 1781 to 1798, each new one with considerable additions. The first contained 169 pages, the second 220, the third, which received considerable additions respecting the morality of Jesus and the means by which he intended to carry his plan into effect, in opposition to Bahrddt, contained 310, together with a dedication to “the author’s old and intimate friend, Abbot Henke to whose suggestion this work is indebted for its existence;” and the fourth, 512 pages. In this last edition, the first part was worked over throughout, the second enriched with what is said respecting the founders of religions, while the third was changed but little, and in the conclusion, not at all. As Böttiger anticipated in his memoirs of Reinhard, the fourth edition is not to be the last. The want of a new one has long been felt, and the continued approbation in which the work has been held since its first publication, affords ample

security for it.* Every reader would doubtless have preferred to receive this new edition from Reinhard's own hand,—at least, to receive it with his own additions. Twelve short notes however is all that has been found among his papers, to which, by the kindness of Mr. Otto of Dresden his last amanuensis, I have had access.

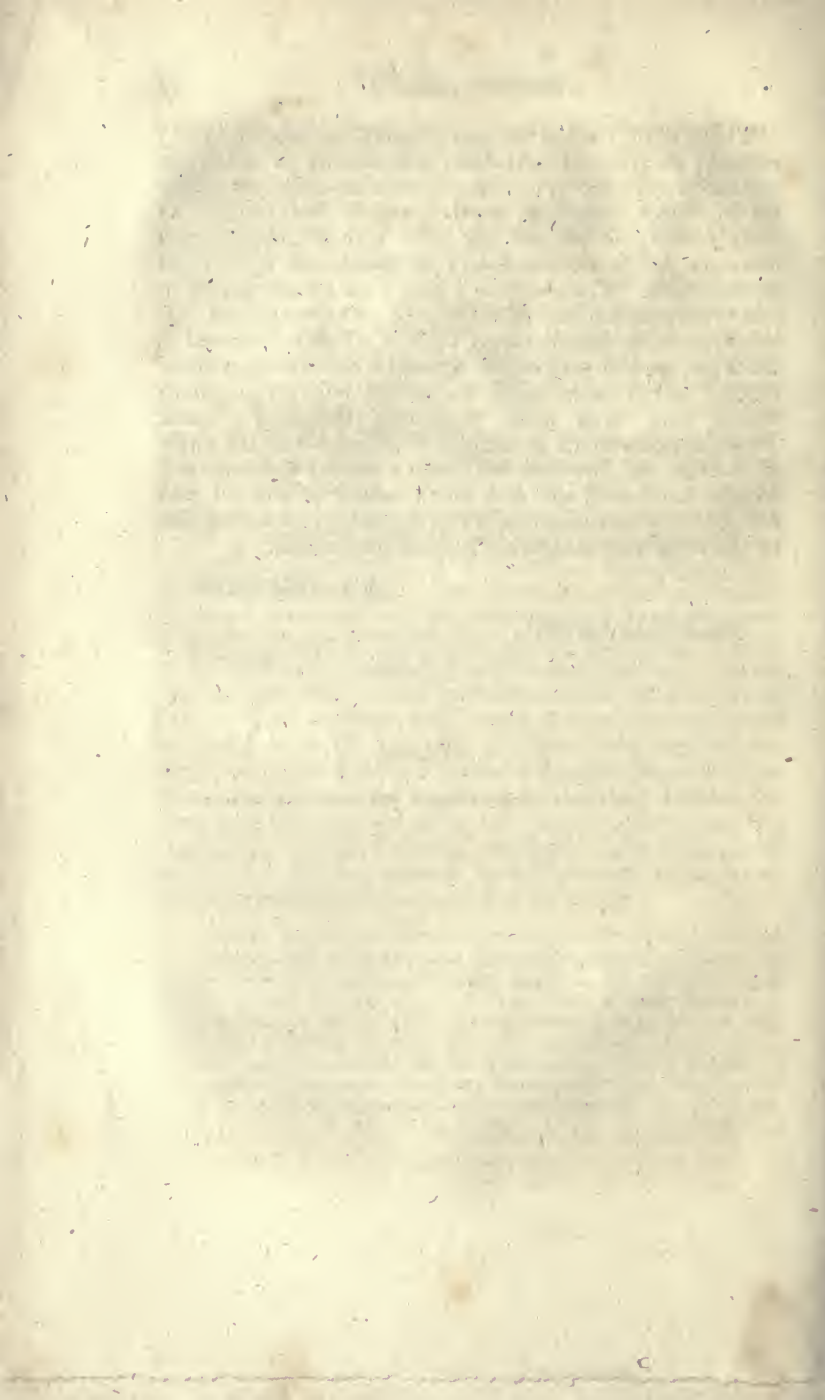
Perhaps it was presumptuous in me to undertake the superintendence of the publication of this edition, burdened as I am with the twofold labor that comes upon me in attending to the duties of my office, and having only fragments of time left, and of course being in a very unfavorable condition, for scientific pursuits. This consideration, however, though I believe it ought to entitle me to the indulgence of the reader, would not allow me to shrink back from the undertaking, valuable as the work is, it having been one of my favorites for more than thirty years, and under a debt of respectful gratitude as I am to its worthy author; and with the approbation of the Lord, a blessing will undoubtedly be the result. The object for which Reinhard composed this work, and respecting which he so often and decidedly expressed his opinion, the advancement of faith in the Saviour of mankind, has been accomplished with regard to many readers, and some even of the more illiterate class, and, as we hope, will be still farther advanced; and my prayer is, that in this way, this work may contribute to renew our recollections of a man of whom an honorable memorial has been erected among us by the Chief Board of Directors in Ecclesiastical affairs, in that, they have had the goodness to purchase Graff's excellent original portrait of him for the seminary church in this place, in which Reinhard's able pulpit talents were first developed.

* Reviews expressing the most decided approbation of this work, have appeared in the *Allg. Deutsch. Bibl.* LI. 375. CII. 38. *Neue Allg. D. Bibl.* XLVII. 63. *Gött. Anz.* 1784. S. 964. *Hall. G. Z.* 1784. S. 337. *A. L. Z.* 1790. II. 689. *Tübing. Anz.* 1799. S. 290. *Hall. Journal f. Pred.* XXXVI. 217. *Gabler, Neuestes Theol. Journ.* III. 24. In addition to the Danish translation, a French translation also made its appearance, entitled: *Essai sur le plan formé par le Fondateur de la Religion Chrétienne pour le bonheur du genre humain.* Par—trad. de l'Allemand par J. L. Alex. Dumas. Dresden, 1799.

The text of the last edition remains unchanged in any respect; for it would have been unbecoming in me to undertake to work it over or make corrections in it, and probably in direct opposition to the wishes and feelings of every reader, for all are delighted with Reinhard's performance, and anxious to obtain possession of it again in its original form. The additions which I have made consist in part of notes at the bottom of the page, of an exegetical, historical and literary character, each of which is included in brackets; and in part, of an appendix containing such additional matter as is called for by the late investigations which have been made respecting Reinhard's work. Those critics who are thoroughly acquainted with the circle of science, and furnished with such a literary apparatus as I have at command, will find much indeed to add. I was obliged to be parsimonious in this respect to prevent the size of the book from increasing beyond due bounds.

H. L. HEUBNER.

Wittenberg, April 4th 1830.



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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. THE CHARACTER OF JESUS, the founder of the Christian religion, is so unique, so extraordinary, and venerable, that even the enemies of this religion, if they are capable of perceiving what true greatness is, must acknowledge that it has not its like in history. Of this circumstance those learned men* who have written in defence of Christianity, long since made such use as to render it superfluous now for me to repeat their observations.

Still oftener have the *salutary effects* produced by Christianity in the world, been spoken of, for the purpose of thence deducing the conclusion, that its author is ac-

* [Duchal, *Vermuthungsgründe für die Wahrheit und Göttl. d. chr. Rel.*, 1ste Rede, Güstrow, 1773; Vernet, *Traité de la Vérité de la Rel. Chr.*, Tom. III. 77—fin., according to Turretin's *Dilucidat.* L. B. 1748, II. 150 seqq.; Less, *Religion*, II. 732—759. The following are also particularly worthy of attention: Eberhard, *Amyntor*, S. 218—243; Carus, *Psychologie der Hebräer*, S. 293—322; J. G. Müller, *Vom Glauben der Christen*, I. 84—176; Schwarz, *Evangelisch christl. Ethick*, Anm. zu § 105; Dwight, *System of Theology*, Vol. II. Sermon. 51—54; [Wilson, *Evidences of Christianity*, Lect. XVII. Tr.] Anna Maria von Schurmann conceived the idea of giving a written representation of Christ, but as she could never satisfy herself, and the thought struck her, that it was like trying to portray the sun with a coal, she desisted from the attempt, acknowledging that she had found a Christian's life to be the best representation that can be given of the life of Christ. Vid. Deutsch. Merkur, J. 1777, Quart. 2. S. 178 ff.; Hess, *Einige Charakterzüge unsers Herrn*; in der neuesten oder 3ten A. von: *Lehre, Thaten, &c. u. H.*, II. 145—173, im 20 Bde. of his *Scripture Biography*. This perhaps was the reason why Niemeyer stopped short of the characteristics of Jesus; and why Reinhard, *System d. Moral*, II. 250. or 276. Anm. y, was unable to find a perfect description of Christ's life.]

tually the Saviour and preserver of men, and his system of instruction the most valuable gift that God could have bestowed upon us.

§ 2. Notwithstanding these considerations, however, which, perhaps of all the proof adduced in favor of Christianity, are the best adapted to touch and win the human heart, one circumstance has been overlooked* which was equally deserving of attention. It has not been particularly thought of, that the *mere plan*, which Jesus formed for improving our race and rendering them happy, supposes a wisdom and greatness of mind, a strength and firmness of soul, and, at the same time, a goodness of heart, and extent of benevolence, the like of which had never been found in *any man*. It has not been observed, that this plan was of a very peculiar kind, and altogether distinguished from every plan that had been sketched and perfected by the most exalted geniuses and the greatest benefactors of mankind, by its embracing *the whole human family*. The plan devised by the author of Christianity for the good of our race, bears the impress of the superiority and dignity of the greatest mind that ever thought and acted upon earth, and must have procured for its author this rank, had no part of it ever been carried into execution. No human mind before him ever conceived the idea of establishing a *kingdom of God*, a *kingdom of truth, morality, and happiness*, and collecting within it, all the nations of the earth;—the idea of founding an order of things, which should be advantageous both to individuals, and communities, and enable human nature to attain the highest degree of excellence;—the great and truly divine idea of radically curing all the evil with which humanity is afflicted, and raising up for the Creator an entirely new, and better generation. No sage, no ruler, no hero of antiquity was ever capable of such enlargement,

* [Eusebius indeed has hinted at this proof in his *Demonstrat. Evan.* l. III. c. 5. p. 135, where he says expressly, that the idea formed by Jesus of giving all mankind a new religion, is one which had never before occurred to a human being. It is certain, however, that Eusebius does not very nicely distinguish the proof derived from the plan, from the proof derived from the effects of this plan.]

such elevation of thought. Look where we will, the traces of such greatness are searched for in vain.

§ 3. (1) In order, however, to form an acquaintance with the author of Christianity in this respect, one must collect together and examine what history has preserved of his enterprises, and the plan with which he commenced ;— must carefully see whether this plan was actually so great, and calculated for the whole human family. The thoughts with which he was occupied, as given in the narratives which his friends have left behind of his life, are expressed without any of the ornaments of eloquence, without any ostentatious pretensions, and generally in an incidental manner ; but yet with such strength and precision, as to leave an impartial man no room to doubt respecting his intentions. We shall prove this, and from the accounts extant, endeavor to give a sketch of the plan which he had in his mind. This will occupy the first part of this work.

(2) We shall then go back into antiquity, and survey all the treasures of those great geniuses who possessed wisdom, strength, and benevolence enough to become the benefactors of their brethren. We shall endeavor to enter into the plans which they formed, and ascertain their compass, and the extent to which they were carried into effect. It will thence be made to appear, that no sage of antiquity, no friend of mankind, however noble and beneficent, had ever been able to ascend to the thought of acting for all. We shall find that they were all confined within the walls of a native city, within the borders of a country, or, at the farthest, of a kingdom composed of several countries. No man *before Jesus*, ever formed a plan of benevolence for improving mankind as a body. No poet ever soared so high. Nothing of the kind is to be found in all antiquity. This glance at the whole, however, this universal benevolence, this unlimited extension of thought, has been common, since the author of Christianity led the way, and pointed out to the human mind, the height, which, until then, had been enveloped in clouds and left untrodden. This will make up the contents of the second part.

(3) Here then we behold the author of the Christian religion, without pattern or guide, walking a path hitherto unknown, and treading a height to which the greatest geniuses had not even approached. He sprung not from a nation of celebrity, nor was he educated in a learned school, or sustained by any favorable circumstance. He was obliged to contend with poverty, lowness, and contempt, and was surrounded with obstacles, difficulties and dangers, which seemed invincible. In his obscure and helpless condition, however, we find him capable of forming a plan for the good of all nations, and cherishing a *thought* which lay beyond the reach of human intellect, though possessed of the greatest powers, and exercised under the most favorable circumstances; we find him capable of making a bold effort to carry it into execution, and indulging a hope that all would be accomplished, never firmer than in the moment when to human view all was lost; when he was forsaken by his intimate friends, opposed and even put to death by his nation. What conclusion must we draw from a phenomenon so distinct in its kind? Shall we not be justified in *considering him the most exalted sage, the greatest benefactor of mankind, a most credible messenger of the Godhead?* This will be our subject of investigation in the third part.

These considerations, indeed, will not afford *incontestible* proof that the religion which Jesus taught was of *divine* origin. If, however, they are of any assistance in persuading those who deny Christianity and its author, to show themselves as reasonable in respect to Jesus as they are in respect to other great men of antiquity, or contribute in any measure towards inducing them to hear *other* and *stronger* proof in favor of Christianity, and examine it *with more impartiality* than they have hitherto done, they will not have been written in vain. And who that is already convinced of the truth of Christianity and the exaltation of its author, will not rejoice to find that *Jesus*, in his benevolent views, surpasses the greatest geniuses and deserves far the most reverence and love?



PART FIRST.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE PLAN DEvised BY JESUS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL MEN.

§ 4. **HE** would be greatly mistaken who should here expect an explanation of what theologians call the *office of Christ*, or the work which he undertook for the redemption of mankind. To this work, according to the Scriptures, belong performances, altogether peculiar, such as an expiatory death, and other important transactions and effects some of which are yet to come. These distinguish what Christ undertook and accomplished for mankind, from every thing which one man has ever been able to do for others. In *this* respect, therefore, *Jesus* can be compared with no other benefactor of the human race whatever, for these are services out of the power of any one to perform for others. In this respect, therefore, *Jesus* stands entirely alone and without example, but on this very account, we shall now leave this part of the subject untouched. We here consider *Jesus* as *any other great man* of antiquity, and explain only those portions of his plan which *bear a resemblance to the benevolent views of other venerable men*, in order thence to draw the conclusion, that his plan is the greatest, most elevated; and most benevolent, that has ever been thought of, or ever can be.

§ 5. We shall not, however, enter into any *prolix disputes* upon the subject. We shall not think it worth while to suggest any thing in opposition to that wickedness, under

the influence of which, an anonymous writer,* very destitute of impartiality and a love of the truth, has written concerning the *object of Jesus*, and the most benevolent views, that a human mind ever entertained, and, by means of poisonous calumnies, endeavored to bring them all into suspicion. That wickedness is too striking, too exasperated, too hostile, not to disgust every man of an uncorrupted heart, and fill him with indignation. Neither can we enter into a detailed examination of all that has lately been said in numerous productions respecting the *object and plan of Jesus*.† It will be sufficient for us to confine ourselves to those questions, too closely connected with our subject, to be left wholly untouched. *In the first place, therefore, we shall collect together and examine what we find in the writings of his friends, respecting the plan which he had in view*, and endeavor to enter into it as far as possible, considering our great distance from the age in which he lived.‡

§ 6. As to the *credibility of the witnesses*, upon whose depositions in this case every thing depends, there is, as it seems to me, no real cause of mistrust. Passing over the fact, that they are universally known to have been honest men; it is evident from the manner in which they have treated this very subject, that they could not have had the least inclination for fiction. From the great and all comprehensive plan which they make Jesus devise,

* [The Wolfenbüttelsche Fragmentist, Herrn. Sam. Reimarus, Vom Zweck Jesu und seiner Jünger, herausg. v. Lessing, Braunschweig, 1778. On the other side, Silberschlag, Antibarbarus, Berlin, 1779; Th. 2n.; Semler, Beantwortung der Fragmente eines Ungenannten, inbes. v. d. Zwecke Jesu, Halle, 1779; Bell, Investigation of the Divine Mission of John the Baptist, and J. C. (Untersuch. d. göttl. Sendung Johannis d. T. u. J. C., übers. v. Henke, Braunschweig, 1779, mit dessen Anhang, S. 343—354.) Consult also the excellent review of the Fragment, in the Allg. Deutsch. Bibl. XL. 356—428; Schlosser, Kleine Schriften, III. 84—113; the ingenious parody by Christ. Kruse, Vom Zwecke des Socrates u. s. Schüler, für Freunde des Wolf. Fragm., L. 1785.]

† [Carl Friedr. Bahrdt, Ausführung des Plans und Zwecks Jesu in Briefen an Wahrheit suchende Leser, 12 Bdchn., Berlin, 1784—1793.]

‡ Vid. Appendix, A.

they never draw any inferences in his favor, nor do they take any notice of the preference to which this unquestionably entitled him over all the other great geniuses of our race. They never exhibit any disposition to glorify him, as it were, in this respect. *They never give a connected delineation of this plan.* Their accounts of the various events of his life, are made up of single fragments, the importance and connexion of which, evidently they did not perceive. To form a clear and correct conception of the views of this original personage, we must combine them together and give the whole a laborious examination. This circumstance of itself affords ample proof, that they did not forge the plan which they describe with the intention of palming it off upon Jesus. In such a case, their accounts would have exhibited more effort to represent him as the author of this plan. They would have made greater exertions to call the attention of the reader to this subject. And in general, on the supposition, that Jesus had nothing to do with the designs of which they speak, it is difficult to comprehend how his friends, taken as they were from the lowest ranks of life, and educated in all the partialities of the Jewish religion, could have palmed upon him a plan, embracing *all mankind*, even *the detested heathen*;—a plan, which exhibits more that is great and noble, than the most daring poet ever attributed to his hero, and of which no one for a long time, understood less than these witnesses themselves. In respect to the credibility of these witnesses, however, I think I may fearlessly appeal to what others have said. I proceed, therefore, without further circumlocution to the matter in hand.

§ 7. In regard to the plan, of which Jesus is said by his friends to have been the author, three circumstances deserve attention; namely, *its compass, its character, and the manner in which it was to be carried into effect.* ITS COMPASS. *Jesus, in his plan embraced mankind at large*; all the nations of the earth then existing, or ever to exist. ITS CHARACTER. It was his intention to establish a kingdom of God, a kingdom of truth, morality and happiness, and collect all nations into it. Finally, THE MANNER, *in which*

it was to be CARRIED INTO EFFECT. Every thing was to be done without using force, or employing the hidden springs of a secret society ; merely by the gentle influence of convincing instruction, and institutions adapted to arouse the moral sensibilities, stimulate the human mind to reflection upon its most important concerns, and warm it with a living zeal for the attainment of its true destination. Of each of these points we shall treat in particular.

I. THE COMPASS OF CHRIST'S PLAN.

§ 8. When Jesus first made his appearance in public, it was apparently as the reformer of his own nation merely, and without seeming to be engaged in a plan of universal extent. He declared that he was sent to devote himself entirely to his own people, Matt. 15: 24 ; spoke particularly of retaining the law and the prophets, Matt. 5: 17—19 ; associated almost exclusively with the Jews, and commanded his disciples when sent to make their first essay at imparting instruction, to avoid all intercourse with foreigners, and confine themselves to their fellow citizens, Matt. 10: 5. It is well known also, that he never separated himself from the ecclesiastical community of the Jews, and that the apostles retained their connexion in this respect, even after they had established numerous churches which bore his name.

From these circumstances, it has been inferred, *that Jesus actually limited his views to his own nation*, and intended merely to purify the prevailing religion and restore *genuine Mosaicism*, it having been adulterated by the lapse of centuries, and the explanations and additions of Jewish sects, almost beyond recognition.* When, however, the expressions of Jesus, as handed down by history,

* Comp. Semler, *Magazin für die Religion*, Th. 1. S. 322 ; Mendelsohn, *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judenthum*, S. 130 f. ; Riem, *Christus und die Vernunft*, S. 6 ff. ; and Jakob, *Annal. der Philosophie, u. des philosophischen Geistes*, Jahrg. 1795, St. XXXIX. S. 306, and St. LXXXIX. S. 706 ; [also *Fragm. v. Zweck Jesu*, S. 19. 66 ff. ; Dr. Th. in Scherer's *Schriftforscher*, I. 3. S. 428—440.]

are considered in their due connexion, and compared together, this opinion appears to be altogether destitute of probability.

§ 9. In the first place, let us attend to the *condition in which Jesus found himself*, at the commencement of his labors. Whatever he may have had in view, it is undeniable, that he was obliged to begin his work somewhere, and measure his steps according to existing circumstances. From the fact, however, that he made his appearance among the Jews, conformed to their laws and customs, and exerted himself mainly at first in behalf of his fellow citizens, it does not follow that *every thing which he resolved upon was for them exclusively*. Where could he have begun his labors to better advantage than where, as a relative, a citizen and friend, he already had numerous connexions, and could easily form more ; where, instead of being under the necessity of opening a door of access, he found one already opened, and a people possessed of much knowledge exactly to his purpose, which would have been sought for in any other nation in vain ? Whatever he resolved upon, was he not obliged to place his chief dependence *upon the attention, esteem, and affection* of those by whom he was immediately surrounded, and with whom he began his operations ? But could he have flattered himself with the hope of being able to produce any useful impressions upon his fellow citizens without at least first remaining with the community to which, by birth, education, and the civil constitution he belonged, until he had produced another state of feeling ? Would he not have excited every one against him, had he at the very commencement of his career, evinced a prepossession in favor of the heathen, to whom the Jewish populace were so hostile ? had he even imprudently discovered an inclination to abolish the existing religious constitution, which every one deemed sacred, and was zealous to defend ? Was it not necessary for him, therefore, to declare that he adhered to the *law and the prophets*, in order to procure a favorable hearing and prevent every one from withdrawing from him at the very out-set ? Besides, his immedi-

ate and personal efforts were *confined to very narrow limits*. He was allowed no time for developing the plan with which he commenced by appropriate actions, and was prevented from making the attempt as soon as opportunity presented for the purpose. It was very natural, therefore, that, during his short public life, in which he had enough to do in order to secure faithful men to whom he might intrust the continuation of his work, he should have made no arrangements for leaving the Jewish community. If it were his intention to separate from it, death overtook him before suitable preparations had been made for so important a step, and the thing could be effected with security. For the same reasons also, he was under the necessity of limiting the first commissions which he gave his disciples, to their own countrymen. Possibly he may have been further influenced in so doing by the reflection, that there was then very much to be done at home, and that his messengers were as yet too incapable of performing any thing among strangers, to be entrusted with more extensive powers. All things well considered, it was also necessary for *Jesus* to make his appearance in the character of a man, having the purification and improvement of his own paternal religion at heart. *In no other character* could he have introduced himself to his countrymen, so as to command their attention and esteem. No *safe conclusion* therefore, can be drawn from his conduct in these respects, as to the compass of his plan. He was obliged to act as he acted, whether he confined his views to his nation, or gave them more ample extent. He, therefore, who infers, that Jesus had merely the improvement of his own paternal religion in view, from the course which he pursued, appeals to *circumstances altogether of an equivocal nature*, and which might as well be combined with any other supposition, and so of course *prove nothing*.

§ 10. On the other hand, so many of the expressions of Jesus plainly indicate his resolution to erect an establishment perfectly new, and entirely different from the religious constitution of the Jews, as to render it a matter of astonishment that it could have been so often overlooked.

Look at the very declaration itself to which such bold appeals have been made in proof of the contrary. '*I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets,*' says he, '*but to fulfil ; for one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all be fulfilled.* He therefore who breaks one of these least commandments and teaches men so, shall be the least in the kingdom of Heaven,' Matt. 5: 17—19. What is this declaration, when considered in connexion with what follows, but a hint, that the heavenly kingdom which he had in view, *was to be a moral establishment, perfectly new, and far exalted above the old constitution?*

As if Christ had spoken as follows : "Hitherto the use of the sacred Scriptures for purposes of moral improvement, has been constantly neglected, and is particularly so at present. They are expressly calculated however, to exert an influence in this respect, and accordingly the law and the prophets are henceforth to receive such a *fulfilment* as they never have received in times past. He therefore who would *fulfil* them, exhaust their meaning, advance their utility, and use them in a proper manner, must consider them in *this* point of view, and exchange the constitution grounded upon them for an institution of pure morality."* Now does not Christ's whole discourse, subsequent to this declaration, undoubtedly prove, that *this was actually the fulfilment which he had in view?* What does he quote from the law? How would he have it observed? How does he explain it? How does he inculcate it? He always confines himself in what he says, to those general commandments which are of universal and eternal obligation in morality. He clears them of the spurious additions and false interpretations of the Pharisees. He represents them in their true extent and all their sanctity. He calls upon his hearers to yield them obedience with an earnestness which condemns the hypocrisy of the Pharisees without forbearance. With the sacrificial rites, ceremonies, and the precepts, which relate to the external constitution of the Jews, he either does not meddle at all, or only in an inci-

* Paul calls this establishing the law, Rom. 3 : 31.

dental way, and for the purpose of showing that they must derive all their value from pure morality, Matt. 5: 23, 24. 6: 16—18. Can any one look at the connexion in which this discourse stands, and have a right apprehension of its spirit, without perceiving that the heavenly kingdom, the establishment of which is here announced, must consist of something more than the Jewish worship? Jesus informed his hearers, as distinctly as his circumstances, and their limited capacities would consistently permit, that the old order of things was to be dissolved into a kingdom of true morality, and the pure worship of God. When this was effected, could not one say for the first time, that the law and the prophets had been fulfilled?*

As soon, however, as Jesus had acquired more influence and authority, he declared in still plainer language, that the old order of things was soon to be destroyed, and a new, more general, and far better order of things to be substituted in its stead. I shall adduce only a few of the most noted passages in proof of this. In Matt. 8: 5—12, we are informed, that a centurion, who was a Gentile, applied to Jesus for help in behalf of his servant, at the same time expressing views and feelings calculated to put the Jews to the blush, and that Jesus, struck with his magnanimity, broke out in the assurance, that the heathen should come from all quarters of the earth and sit down in the kingdom of Heaven, while the Jews, the children of the kingdom, should be cast out of it. Whatever we understand in this place by the kingdom of Heaven, this declaration unquestionably implies, that a change was at this time to be expected, which should divest the Jews of the privileges to which they thought themselves exclusively entitled, and confer them upon the heathen. On another occasion, Jesus repeated this declaration in a still more definite manner. During the latter part of his public career, and shortly before his execution, finding no farther reasons, from any thing that he had to do or suffer, for keeping it

* Compare Grotius upon the passage, Annotatt. in Nov. Test., where a very correct representation is given of its true meaning.

a secret, he openly affirmed in the temple 'that the kingdom of God was to be taken from the Jews and given to the gentiles,' Matt. 21: 43. Mark 12: 9. Luke 20: 16, and went so far as to clothe his predictions with various instructive narratives, Matt. 22: 1—14. Now how could the Jews have been rejected and the heathen substituted in their stead, without the introduction of an order of things, new, and entirely different from the former?—When Jesus first sent out his disciples with a commission to excite the attention of their fellow citizens to his enterprises, he did not conceal from them in the least degree the fact, that their calling was a very dangerous one, Matt. 10: 16, and the business intrusted to them greatly detested, Matt. 10: 22. He told them of the abuses of every kind to which they should be subjected, vs. 17, 18, and observed that the accomplishment of his views would unavoidably result in a universal exasperation and dissension, which should even disturb the peace of families, and sever the tenderest connexions, vs. 34—36. Had Jesus had no other object before him than the improvement of the prevailing religion, could he have anticipated such dangerous commotions, and spoken of them before hand? The labors of John the Baptist did not disturb the public tranquillity, for he undertook nothing in opposition to the established constitution. Now if Jesus, as the result of what he intended to accomplish, looked forward to a dissolution of all former relations, and a state of war between all parts of society, must he not have intended to go much farther than John did? Must he not have purposed the actual overthrow of the regulations then in existence?—There is something remarkable in the manner, in which, on every occasion, he explained those commandments of the law of Moses, which related to the *external service of God*, and made up a great part of the Jewish constitution. Nothing was more sacred in the estimation of a Jew than sacrifice. Jesus never intimated that a man should offer sacrifice, but he often censured the abuses, which, to the prejudice of morality, had crept into the service, Matt. 15: 5, 6. Mark 7: 11, 12, and with feelings of marked approbation,

told a learned man who had asserted love to God and man to be of more value than "all whole burnt offerings," that he was not far from the kingdom of God, Mark 12: 34. Nothing appeared more inviolable to the Jews than the commandment respecting the Sabbath. Jesus purposely availed himself of every opportunity which presented itself for correcting their views respecting the Sabbath, inculcating a more liberal mode of thinking in this respect, and convincing them, that that whole precept must be made subordinate to the general laws of morality, Matt. 12: 1—15. Mark 2: 23—28. 3: 1—6. Luke 6: 1—11. John 5: 9—19. 7: 20—23. He went so far as to intimate to them that he did not consider that precept as binding upon his person, John 5: 17, and that he had power to abolish it altogether,* Matt. 12: 8. Luke 6: 5.† The constitution then existing rested very essentially upon the traditions of the fathers, and the additions which had been made to the precepts of Moses. So long had these oral illustrations been recognised as valid, that it was deemed necessary to let every thing remain as it had hitherto done. Jesus attacked these traditions on all occasions, Matt. 5: 21 seqq., and did it with an earnestness which evinced itself by the most vehement reproaches. Matt. 15: 1—9. Mark 7: 1—13. Matt. 23: 1—39. He compared all

* It is also to be observed that Jesus undertook to effect a change respecting the subject of divorcements, unquestionably at variance with the Mosaic law, and advantageous to morality, and urged the abolition of the Mosaic precept, Matt. 19: 1—9. Mark 10: 1—6.

† Grotius, as is well known, does not explain this passage of Christ, but of *every man in general*, and appeals to Mark 2: 27, 28, in support of this explanation; and Bolte in his remarks, *Zum Bericht des Matthäus von Jesu dem Messia*, S. 190 ff., has lately defended this interpretation in detail. It is certainly not opposed to the *usus loquendi*. The connexion however seems to require these words to be applied to Christ, and understood of his power over the Sabbath. He had just remarked, (v. 6,) as is conceded by Grotius himself, that he was greater than the temple. After this assertion, it was to be expected that he would exalt himself above the Sabbath. Now, as by way of distinction, he frequently calls himself *the son of man*, so the eighth verse is unquestionably to be explained of him and his power to make changes in the commandment respecting the Sabbath. There is something of a similar import in Matt. 17: 25, 26.

these merely human precepts to pernicious plants, which must be entirely rooted up, Matt. 15: 13 ; bitterly censured the Pharisees for taking so much pains to make proselytes to a disfigured religion, Matt. 23: 15 ; and finally, engaged to deliver the poor oppressed people from the whole burden of the Mosaic law, and give them the easy yoke of a pure, spiritual religion in its stead, Matt. 11: 28, 29. Could it have been the design of a man to spare and defend a constitution, concerning the most essential and most holy parts of which he made such declarations? On the other hand, is it not sufficiently apparent from these assertions, that he had determined to weaken its authority and gradually prepare the way for its overthrow?

Jesus made known his resolution in still more definite terms, whenever the circumstances under which he spoke, were such, that an undissembled declaration of it could produce no injury and occasion no misunderstanding. In the very first year of his public ministry, he informed a Samaritan woman, who could not possibly take offence at what she heard, that the religious constitution of the Jews was drawing to a close ; that the time was then at hand in which the true worship of the father should no longer be confined to a particular place ;—in which all Jewish and Samaritan, all merely external worship, should entirely cease, and God be adored in spirit and in truth, John 4: 20—24. Jesus could not have expressed in clearer and stronger terms than it is here done, his determination to substitute a new, better, and more extensive religion, instead of the Jewish constitution, which presented such obstacles to the extension of a spiritual religion, and was calculated to confine it to a single nation,—to one corner of the earth. In the confidential circle of his apostles, he spoke in a similar manner. When Peter, in a conversation, at which none but his fellow apostles were present, declared they were convinced he was the Messiah, Jesus not only approved of this decision, but added that by means of Peter, he intended to found a church which should endure forever, and into which Peter should admit whom he would, Matt. 16: 18, 19. In these words, the resolution of Jesus to establish a religious society, peculiar, and

entirely different from that of the Jews, is too clearly expressed to be mistaken. His church is to *be founded*. Had he had the improvement of the Jewish religion solely in view, he certainly would not have spoken of *founding a church*. In the *new church* the highest power is to be conceded to Peter, who is to open and shut it whenever he pleases. In the *Jewish church* neither Christ nor his apostles sought after authority and power. It must have been his intention therefore to separate *his church* from *that*, and give it regulations entirely distinct. Indeed he says so, in Matt. 18: 17, 18, where, under the new constitution, soon to go into operation, similar power is also conferred upon the *other* apostles. If with the above we compare Matt. 16: 28. Mark 9: 1, and Luke 9: 27, it will appear that the successful enlargement of this church, or, which is the same thing, the kingdom of heaven, which he was engaged in founding, was to commence with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, when, as is well known, the Jewish constitution ceased, and the Christian stood forth entirely alone. This last point, however, deserves more particular attention. It cannot be denied that Jesus spoke of a near overthrow of the Jewish state, and an entire destruction of the temple. He spoke of these changes more than once, Luke 13: 34, 35. 19: 41—44. Matt. 22: 7. 23: 33—39, and described them to his apostles, with all their attending circumstances, and the consequently successful progress of his undertaking, in so clear and minute a manner, Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi., as to remove all doubt that he expected such a revolution, and considered it as altogether unavoidable. When we reflect therefore, that he expressly makes a distinction between his own affairs and those of the religious constitution of the Jews, and represents the decay of the latter and the destruction of the temple, as events which should conduce to the advantage of his own undertaking, and the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 24: 30, 31. Luke 12: 27, 28, can we deem it in the least degree probable that he aimed solely at the improvement of his own nation, without ever forming the design of separating himself from

that society, which he knew would remain faithful to the old order of things? And, finally, what shall we say, when he speaks in direct terms of another community and an entirely new system of religion, which should not only be opposed to the old one, but render it superfluous?—when he assures us of his determination solemnly to consecrate and confirm this new constitution by his blood,—by his death? Matt. 26: 28. Mark 14: 24. Luke 22: 20. Must we not admit this to be a declaration, that the constitution then existing, was antiquated and useless, and an intimation as clear as possible, that he was thinking upon something new and better?

§ 11. If we can show, however, that the plan in which Jesus was engaged, was of universal extent, embracing all mankind, then no room will be left for the supposition that he intended merely to reform his own nation. Now that such was the extent of his views and the compass of his plan, is too evident to be misapprehended. It shines forth from his conduct, is expressed in his words, and confirmed by the truths, which he generally inculcated.

(a) The conduct of Jesus, as represented by the evangelists, exhibits no very indistinct traces of views, that stretched beyond the boundaries of Judea. He every where acts like a man, who has something of greater importance before him, than merely the improvement of his fellow citizens. He repeatedly casts a glance upon foreigners, and elevates it even to mankind at large. That he thought of the condition of the heathen, and made their moral necessities an object of contemplation, he has here and there intimated with sufficient plainness. Sometimes he mentions them in his discourses, and when he does so, it is always with a reference to their wants, Matt. 5: 47. 6: 7, 32. 20: 25. Mark 10: 42.* Notwithstanding the great caution with which he avoided intimate connexions with the heathen, in order not to offend his intolerant countrymen, he by no means excluded them from participating in

* With respect to the last passage, vid. Michaelis' Syntagma commentationum, Tom. II. p. 30 seqq.

his instructions, whenever they found opportunity for the purpose. This is evident from the reproaches, which were so often heaped upon him for associating with publicans and sinners, Mark 2 : 15, 16. Luke 5 : 30. 15 : 1, 2. 19 : 7 ; for according to the *usus loquendi* of those times, the term sinners may not only have included wicked and abandoned men in general,* but the heathen in particular, and consequently the Romans ;† and that the collectors of the Jewish custom, with whom Jesus associated, were sometimes heathen, is very probable from the fact, that they were in the pay of the Romans, with whom they held constant intercourse.‡ Even the multitudes, which collected around him in desert places, appear occasionally to have been heathen, who, hearing of his general celebrity, undoubtedly felt as anxious to see him as his own fellow citizens. This can be inferred with a tolerable degree of certainty from Mark 3 : 8, and Luke 6 : 17,|| and that he ever refused such persons, or withdrew himself from them, we are nowhere informed. Besides, Galilee, the principal scene of Christ's actions, was so full of heathen, that he could not have tarried there a long time, had he wished to abstract himself entirely from them.§ From John 4 : 40, we learn, that soon after the commencement of his public labors, he came in contact with the Samaritans, and, finding them very susceptible of his instructions, spent two whole days with them at Sychar. It is impossible not to perceive the im-

* Comp. Bolte's note on Matt. 10: 10. S. 146 seqq.

† Hence in Matt. 18: 17, the explanatory word *heathen*, is added to the expression *publicans*, instead of the common one *sinners*. The sinners to whom Jesus was to be delivered, were, as is well known, the Romans. Matt. 26: 45. Luke 24: 7, comp. chap. 18: 32, and Gal. 2: 16.

‡ Krebs, *De usu et praestantia Romanae Historiae in Nov. Test. interpretatione*, III. p. 22 seqq.

|| Jesus is said to have had hearers from the region of Tyre and Sidon. In all probability these were heathen. Comp. Mark 7: 24—26. Matt. 15: 21, 22, and Reland's *Palaestina*, Tom. II. p. 1046 seqq.

§ Bachiene, *Beschreibung von Palaestina*, Th. II. B. IV. § 620—624.

partiality with which he did justice, both to the Samaritans and heathen, whenever he found them distinguished for any good qualities. He neglected no opportunity for bringing such excellencies into notice, and putting his own countrymen to the blush in this respect, Matt. 8: 10. 15: 28. Luke 17: 17, 18. 10: 33 seqq. Whenever foreigners applied to him, he kindly assisted them, and performed the same wonderful works for them that he did for afflicted Jews, Matt. 8: 5—13. 15: 21—28. Luke 17: 11—19. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus was not only acquainted with the bitter hatred of his passionate countrymen towards every thing not of Jewish origin, but that he considered strangers also as objects of benevolence, and sought to do them good whenever it was possible to do so without creating offence. His conduct, however, would never have been combined with such prudent foresight, or directed with such propriety as always shone forth from his actions, had his views been limited to his own nation, to the Samaritans, or to the heathen; had not his plan taken in all mankind without distinction.

(b) Whatever doubt, however, we may have had respecting the intention of Jesus to devote himself to the good of the whole human family, it vanishes when we hear him speak. He has given a particular description of the unlimited extent of his views, and, in so doing, employed every expression capable of designating the greatest universality. The *usus loquendi* of the Jews, as has already been observed, distinguished but two classes of men, and hence by Jews and gentiles in that age, was meant all mankind. Now Jesus unquestionably intended to render himself useful to the Jews. With them indeed he commenced his labors. More than once, however, he asserted that he should not confine himself to them;—that he considered the heathen also as the objects of his solicitude;—that he was to effect a great change in affairs, which should make the rest of mankind partakers of all that kindness and those privileges of which the Jews were so jealous, and, under the influence of an envious selfishness, wished to be exclusively possessed;—a change, which should oblige the

incorrigible portion of the Jews to yield the precedence to the heathen. What else can be the meaning of the words, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth?" Matt. 8: 11, 12. What else can be the import of what he said on another occasion very similar, 'that it would prove of no avail to the Jews, if they did not amend, to have had him, a fellow citizen, for their teacher and intimate associate;—that on the other hand, there should come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, those that should sit down in the kingdom of God; and that the last should be first, and the first last?' Luke 13: 24—30. What but a plan embracing the heathen, is intended in the touching description, in which he represents himself as 'the good shepherd who lays down his life for the welfare of his flock, but who has other sheep which are not of this fold, and which must also be brought in, in order that there may be but one shepherd and one fold?' John 10: 16.* How could he have expressed his determination to extend his instructions and the benefits thence resulting, beyond the boundaries of his native country, in plainer language, than when, on a previous occasion, he informed his disciples, that after his departure from them, they should encounter the hatred of their fellow citizens, and be driven into other regions;—treatment which was to result from their making known the truth to the heathen? Matt. 10: 18. 24: 14. Mark

* [The author of *Jesus Universal-Religion*, ein Seitenstück zu Reinhard, &c., S. 26, L. 1811, very properly suggests, that by the other sheep in this place, Jesus did not mean those tribes in Syria and Palestine, which had revolted at the time of Rehoboam, nor those Jews, who, after Alexander, by means of an extensive commerce, were scattered all over Europe, (as Paulus assumes in his comments upon the passage,) but all other nations. To take *γενήσεται*, however, as an optative, "may there be one fold and one shepherd," is evidently at variance with the manner in which the clauses of the 16th verse are connected together by *καί*, as well as Christ's mode of speaking in verse 28, which does not express a wish merely, but is altogether positive.]

13: 10. From this collection of passages,* it is evident, that Christ's thoughts were always directed to the Jews and heathen at the same time, and that the work in which he was engaged, was calculated as much for the one as the other. Now as in the idiom of that country, the phrase, Jews and heathen, designated all mankind, it necessarily follows that Jesus, in making use of it, gave his plan the greatest universality, and distinguished it as a plan for the whole human family.

The phrase, *the world*, has a meaning of similar extent: Sometimes it designates the *whole earth* as the *dwelling place* of the human race, at others, this race itself.—Jesus makes use of this phrase also, for the purpose of defining the object and compass of his benevolent plan. In the parable of the tares, Matt. 13: 24—30, he has compared his followers to the good seed which was obliged to grow up with noxious weeds. The field however, where the seed was to be sown, according to his own explanation, vs. 37, 38, was not Palestine, nor the region inhabited by the Jews, but *the whole earth, the world*, without exception or limitation. He informed Nicodemus, John 3: 16, 17, a man proud of the imaginary preference due to his nation, in express terms, that he had been sent by the love of God for the *good of the world, the whole human family*; —that he came not to condemn the *world* but to save it;—an expression, which, as is evident from chap. 12: 46, 47, he used often to repeat and inculcate. In the 6th chap. of John, with reference to his having fed a great multitude on a former day, he calls himself the living bread, sent by God to give nourishment, and strength, not to the Jews only, but to the *world, to all mankind without exception*, vs. 33 and 51. Precisely in the same way he describes himself as the light of

* The sentence, Matt. 9: 13. Mark 2: 17. Luke 5: 32, also indicates with no inconsiderable degree of plainness, a resolution to improve the heathen, provided the expression *δίκαιοι* is understood of the worshippers of the true God, and the *ἁμαρτωλοὶ*, of those who are not,—of the heathen. Vid. Nachtigall's Buch der Weisheit, S. 195 ff.

the world, John 3: 19. 8: 12. 9: 5, as the teacher and benefactor of mankind, and compares himself to the sun which produces its effect upon every part of *the globe*, chap. 11: 9. In the latter part of his life, a woman poured a costly perfume upon his head, while he sat at meat in Bethany. His disciples were indignant at her for the act, but he told them that, wheresoever the Gospel should be introduced *throughout the whole world*, what she had done should be spoken of for a memorial of her, Matt. 26: 13. Mark 14: 9. He went with willingness to the scene of his sufferings, and to meet death, in order to exhibit *to the whole world* his great love towards God as well as the punctuality of his obedience, John 14: 31; and after his departure, the Spirit of truth, by means of his disciples, was to teach this very same *world*, and rescue it from the power of ignorance and vice, John 16: 8—11. In particular, he frequently makes use of this very comprehensive expression in the prayer to God, which he uttered shortly before his crucifixion, John xvii. Among other things, in v. 18, he says expressly that as God had sent him into *the world*, so he would send his disciples into *the world*; that *the world, all mankind*, should yet learn to consider him as the messenger of God, v. 27. Now in these passages, it cannot be doubted, that the phrase, *the world*, means all mankind without exception, for it cannot be limited in any respect, without opposing the *usus loquendi*. Jesus, therefore, unquestionably had the whole human family in view and consequently deserves well of all mankind.*

Jesus however makes use of other phrases of the same import, for designating the greatest universality, whenever he speaks of the extent of the plan. He says that he intended to give his life a ransom *for many*, Matt. 20: 28, and Mark 10: 45; that his blood was to be shed for *many*, Matt. 16: 28. Mark 14: 24. Now we know that

* † In Matt. 5: 13, 14 also, the destination of the apostles to become the teachers and reformers of mankind at large, is expressed with sufficient clearness.

the *many*, according to the *usus loquendi* of the Hebrew, are *the whole multitude spoken of*, and consequently in this place *the whole human family*, Rom. 5: 15, comp. v. 12. This expression therefore is used to designate the extent of Christ's benevolence, and show that he was devoted to the best interests of all mankind. In Matt. 18: 11, he states, that the object of his coming into the world, was, to save that which was lost, comp. Luke 19: 10, and Matt. 9: 13, and procure eternal happiness for all who obey him, John 6: 38—40. Consequently it was his intention to leave none unaided who stood in need of his assistance, but to devote himself to the welfare of all without exception. Even the term *all*, however, is employed. In John 12: 20—32, we are informed that some Greeks, that is heathen, who had turned Jews, having come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover, were anxious to form an acquaintance with Jesus, and made known their wishes to Andrew and Philip. As he was expected soon to establish a splendid earthly kingdom, probably their only object was to recommend themselves to his notice, by a timely introduction. He therefore evinced no desire to see them. On the other hand, in his answer to the two disciples, he compared himself to a grain of wheat, which must die before it can bring forth any fruit, and gave them to understand that his end was drawing near; that the man, who would obtain the reward, must pass through such difficulties as he had done; that immediately after his death, his cause, which, like a grain of wheat, was soon to undergo great changes, should germinate and bring forth abundance of fruit; and that then he should draw all men unto him, for that then, the time would have come for him to devote himself indiscriminately to the welfare of all.* About this time, or shortly before his death, he held a private conversation with his apostles, respecting the destruction that awaited their country, the city, and the temple,

* Nösselt, *Opusculorum ad interpretat. Sac. Scripturar.* Fasc. II. Diss. I. p. 3 seqq.

in which, according to Mark 13: 10, he told them expressly, that his doctrines must first be preached among *all nations*. In the solemn prayer to God, already quoted, John 17: 2, he declares his determination to give eternal life to *all flesh, all mankind*, as far as God had marked them out for his disciples and followers. The command, however, which he gave to his disciples on his departure out of the world, is decisive in respect to the universality of his plan. In it he no longer limits their labors to Palestine or the Jewish nation, but orders them to go into all the world and preach the gospel *to every creature*,—all mankind without exception, Mark 16: 15; to teach *all nations and baptize them*, Matt. 28: 19. Luke 24: 47; and tells them that ‘they shall be his witnesses at Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth,’ Acts 1: 8. Language, therefore, contains no expression indicative of the greatest universality, of which Jesus did not make use, in order to express the compass of his plan. It is impossible to convey the idea, that he had all mankind in view, in stronger and more definite terms than he has done it.

(c) The doctrines which Jesus taught and inculcated, also exhibit indubitable traces of that extension of thought, of which we have been speaking, and of efforts to effect a benevolent change in behalf of the whole human family, and to facilitate its accomplishment. Of his strong declarations against the traditions of the Jews, which had tended so much to prevent them from holding familiar intercourse with the heathen, I have already taken notice.* He also rejected the distinction of clean and unclean food, which had contributed not a little to increase the difficulties in the way of such intercourse, Mark 7: 14—23, and with the greatest animation attacked the national pride of his

* [The Talmud is at the present day one of the principal obstacles to the conversion of the Jews. Vid. Von Kortum, Ueber Judenthum und Juden, S. 17 f. 44 ff; Rohrer, Ueber die Jüdischen Bewohner der Oesterr. Monarchie, S. 120 ff.; Friedländer, Ueber die Verbesserung der Israeliten in Pohlen, S. 18 ff. 22 ff.]

countrymen, which had been one of its mightiest obstacles. He most vehemently censured that show of sanctity under which the Pharisees attracted the admiration of the ignorant populace, looked upon the heathen as contemptible, and represented all intercourse with them as contaminating.* He most urgently recommended a thorough reformation of the heart and life, and the worship of God in spirit and in truth. It was necessary for him to do all this, in order to prepare his countrymen for the peaceable abolition of their ceremonial services, which had hitherto proved an impassible barrier between them and other nations, and been considered as containing the essence of pure morality and true religion. He inculcated nothing with more earnestness than a belief in the universal and impartial love of God, which is extended to the very fowls of heaven; on which account, he usually called God *the Father in heaven*. It was impossible for any one to contemplate this doctrine and its results, without viewing the heathen in a milder light, and approaching them with feelings of benevolence and esteem. He spoke of nothing in higher terms than the kindness with which God pardons the vicious and wandering, as soon as they repent and reform. What can be more touching and beautiful, than the manner in which, in the parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15: 11—32, he applies this truth to the heathen, and exhibits them, after a long wandering, as returning and again received into their father's house?† In

* Examine interpreters upon Matt. 15: 26. It is the misanthropical disposition of this sect in particular, and not that of the whole nation, which Tacitus describes in his history, l. V. c. 5. The Pharisees, as this writer remarks, actually had "adversus omnes alios hostile odium;" and what he subjoins immediately afterwards respecting the proselytes which they made, was true of them in the highest sense: "Nec quicquam prius imbuuntur, quam contemnere Deos, exuere patriam; parentes, liberos, fratres vilia habere;" a true commentary upon the words of Jesus; "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two fold more the child of hell than yourselves," Matt. 23: 15.

† Michaelis' remarks upon this passage, S. 454; [In the notes doubtless, appended to his translation of the N. T. in Germ.—Tr.]

order to inspire his proud and cruel countrymen with milder dispositions and feelings towards others, he represents the exalted worth of human nature in the liveliest colors, and shows them, that it ought to be respected, even in the smallest child and meanest slave. Finally, what was better calculated to soften the hard-heartedness of the Jews and prepare them for more familiar intercourse with the heathen, than the command to love all mankind, which he grounded upon the universal love of the Father in heaven, who makes his sun to shine upon all nations, and sends his rain as plentifully upon the fields of the vicious, as those of the virtuous? By representing love to mankind in connexion with love to the Father in heaven, as the substance of all morality, he entirely and forever abolished all party considerations in respect to distinction of family, rank, nation and religion. The neighbour to be loved as one's self, was every man without exception, Luke 10: 29—37. Now the object which Jesus had in view in all these instructions is perfectly evident. As far as comprehended and followed, they would necessarily expand the human heart, and excite that noble public spirit, without which no great and benevolent plan can ever be carried into effect. It is only when we admit that Jesus had a plan in view, which aimed at the good of all mankind, that we perceive the reason why these doctrines constituted the main part of his instructions, and why he was so anxious to instil them into the very hearts of his hearers.

§ 12. From what has been said then, it follows, that there is the highest degree of probability of which such a thing is capable, in favor of the position, that Jesus was engaged in a plan of universal extent; for he has declared all mankind to be the object of his efforts and cares; not in a few cases, but often; not in ambiguous and reserved, but in definite and unreserved language; not in a cold and indifferent manner, but with an energy, warmth, and holy ardor which boldly met every obstacle, and sacrificed life itself for the accomplishment of the great object in view. In short, the unlimited universality of his

purpose is illustrated and confirmed by his words, actions, and instructions. It is no where said or intimated, that he waited until he found himself incapable of producing any effect upon his own countrymen, and was obliged to relinquish his plan of rescuing them from moral and political degradation, before he expanded his views and directed his thoughts to foreigners. On the other hand, I have shown that the universality of his plan commenced with his ministry. The first year of his public labors had scarcely elapsed, before he spoke of receiving the heathen into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 8: 11, 12, and informed the Samaritan woman, that the whole earth was soon to be consecrated as a temple to the service of God, and God to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, John 4: 21—24. True, he spoke in clearer and stronger terms upon the subject towards the close of his public career, but that his plan was perfected at its very commencement, cannot be denied. He kept its accomplishment before him in every step that he took while on the theatre of action, with a clearness, which could have resulted only from his having in view a plan accurately formed, and perfected in all its parts. Every thing that he taught and did, was exactly to the purpose.—Had he had nothing of the kind in contemplation, he would not have cast so many glances at this great object, while under the necessity of confining his labors to his countrymen, nor have observed on so many occasions that he felt himself called to be something more than a reformer of the obstinate Jews. One of the finest objects of history is to make us acquainted with great men, and enable us to develop their plans. In the present case, it has accomplished this object most effectually; and the great man cannot be found who has so often and so clearly expressed himself respecting the compass of his enterprises and plans as Jesus. Were we, therefore, as unprejudiced and impartial in judging of him, as, according to rule, we usually are, in judging of others, we should never hesitate to believe, that Jesus had the good of all men in view, and be constrained to admit, that every thing that history has ever said

respecting the views of any great man, must be uncertain, if no certainty be found here.*

II. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S PLAN.

§ 13. *But what were Christ's real intentions? what character did he give to his plan?* In answering this question, I shall confine myself closely to what the Evangelists have said upon the subject. If the expressions which they use be impartially compared together, we shall find that they exhibit a clearness and connexion, which must remove every important doubt respecting the real character of Christ's plan.

Jesus commenced his public career with the declaration, that *the kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of God was at hand*, Matt. 4: 17. Mark 1: 15. Luke 4: 43, and conducted in a manner, from which every one may see, that it was not his intention to be considered merely as a herald and harbinger of *this heavenly kingdom*, but as *its author and founder*. From the whole course he pursued, it is evident that his object was to prepare for a mighty change upon earth. He spoke of a commission which he had received from God, in the execution of which he was obliged to engage, John 10: 18. 12: 49, 50; and of a work, which God had intrusted to him, John 4: 34. 9: 4. 17: 4. He early chose assistants to be educated agreeably to his views, and ultimately employed as his delegates, Mark 3: 13—19. Luke 6: 12—16. Matt. 10: 2—4. He declared, that by means of these delegates he would establish *an imperishable church*, Matt. 16: 18, 19, and invite all the nations of the earth to participate in the *kingdom of God*, Mark 16: 15. Matt. 28: 19. Finally, he always represented his own life, as the expense at which this divine kingdom should be established upon earth, John 10: 11—16. Matt. 21: 33—44. 26: 28. Luke 22: 20; while, at the same time, he spoke of himself, as the most distinguished per-

* Vid. Appendix B.

sonage in the new state, as its head and king, Matt. 20: 20—23. 21: 38, 42. 24: 30. 25: 31. John 10: 11—16. 17: 2. 18: 36, 37.

§ 14. That the manner in which Jesus introduced himself to his countrymen, had a reference to the *expectations they entertained*, is perhaps undeniable. Had they not at this time, been looking for such a change as was commonly signified by the expressions, the *kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God*, under which they comprehended the sum of their most exalted hopes and desires, it would have been in vain for him to predict the approach of such a kingdom, for people would have paid no attention to the notice and have altogether neglected to prepare themselves for the event; but, because Jesus made use of this attractive form of expression in order to give a concise intimation of his purpose, it by no means follows, that with it he combined such *views and expectations as his countrymen had done*; nor, because he made his appearance as the author and founder of the kingdom of heaven, that he pledged himself to the performance of every thing which they expected and demanded of this kingdom.* We must ascertain what views *he had respecting the kingdom of God* which he came to establish, entirely from his own explanations. This is the only way to avoid imputing to him something false, and proceeding upon the gratuitous supposition, that his views respecting the kingdom of heaven, coincided with the expectations of his countrymen. In order, therefore, to obtain a right apprehension of the character of his plan, I shall examine his description of *the kingdom of heaven, the establishment of which he declares to have been the*

* [This is one of the principal arguments adduced by the Fragmentist, Vom Zwecke Jesu, S. 10—12. 24 ff. 108—I13. 129—133, in support of his assertion respecting the political plan of Jesus. Moreover it was proper that Christ should reject those capricious views of the kingdom of God which originated in the contracted dispositions and feelings of his nation, and commence with the purer ones grounded upon the Old Testament, and which the Jews might and would have known, had they examined the Scriptures in a conscientious manner. Comp. Matt. 22: 29.]

principal object of his appearance upon earth, and of all his efforts.

§ 15. There is a great lack of credible information as to the history of the Jews and their mode of thinking, at the time of Christ: It is very difficult, therefore, to form accurate conceptions of the views which this nation entertained respecting the kingdom of God, of which they were then in expectation. It is quite certain, however, that they flattered themselves with pleasing dreams of *an earthly kingdom*, and were anticipating a change, which should not only restore them to freedom and civil independence, but put them in the possession of every sensual enjoyment, and give them a splendid dominion over the other nations of the earth.* Those Jews to be found in foreign countries, had similar expectations;† nor were the disciples of Christ themselves destitute of them, as is perfectly evident from the accounts of the Evangelists.

§ 16. Every thing that Jesus did, on the other hand, goes to prove, to the greatest degree of certainty, that by the kingdom of heaven he understood no such thing as a universal monarchy of the Jews.

(a) It is well known that he made his appearance in the greatest poverty, Matt. 8: 20. Luke 9: 58, and lived upon the generosity of his friends, Luke 8: 3. It is also well known, that, so far from seeking any connexion with the rich and powerful, he was careful to avoid them, John 4: 46—50. Luke 9: 9. Particularly deserving of notice, however, is the zeal with which, on every occasion, he attacked the Pharisees, the strongest party among his countrymen, and seemed purposely to excite their indignation. Had it been his intention to effect a political change, he would have courted their favor, and been oblig-

* Vid. Corrodi, *Kritische Geschichte des Chiliasmus*, Band I. S. 108 ff., and Hess, *Ueber die Lehren, Thaten, und Schicksale unsers Herrn*, Abschn. V. S. 135 ff. [Ausg. v. 1806, B. I. Abschn. VI. S. 386 ff.]

† Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Part I. Book I. Ch. V. p. 169 seqq.

ed to unite himself with them.* Instead of doing so, he devoted himself to the common people, Matt. 9: 36. 11: 5, and especially to those, who were for the most part despised and neglected, Luke 5: 29, 30. 15: 1, 2. His solé object in this was, to instruct them in religion and labor for their moral improvement, Matt. 11: 5. Luke 5: 31, 32. That he did not do so in order to obtain the affections of the multitude, and employ them in accomplishing something of a political nature, is evident from the fact, as will be shown farther on, that he made his escape from them and retired, as soon as he saw his efforts produce any unusual excitement among them, John 6: 15. In general, nothing is to be found in any of his discourses respecting the public affairs of the nation and the condition of the state. On the other hand, he put off all those who applied to him upon such subjects, Luke 12: 13, 14. John 8. 1—11, and once, when constrained to give his opinion in regard to a political question proposed to him, he declared himself in favor of *supporting the established constitution and yielding obedience to the Romans*, Matt. 22: 17, 21. Mark 12: 13—17. Luke 20: 20—26. Besides, he never appeared with the bustle and importunity of a demagogue, determined to effect a political revolution, and give a new constitution to the state, but always in the peaceful capacity of a teacher, who had the instruction, and moral improvement of his fellow citizens solely at heart.

(b) Let us now attend to the declarations which he combined with such conduct. He was asked when the kingdom of God should come. His answer was, 'It will not be announced by visible pomp, nor excite surprise, *for it has its seat in the inner man*, Luke 17: 20, 21.† He

* The best accounts of the almost boundless influence which this sect exerted upon the nation, are given by Josephus. Comp. particularly, Antiq. l. XIII. c. 10. §5. Havercamp's ed., [Whiston's trans. the same, Tr. ;] also Serarii Trihaeresium, l. II. c. 13. p. 79.

† This interpretation is most agreeable to the *usus loquendi* and the context. For the *usus loquendi*, vid. Schleusner's Lex. under the word, *εστος*. This meaning is required by the context, because

told his apostles, who delighted to indulge themselves in pleasing dreams respecting the greatness and power which they should possess in the kingdom of their Lord, in direct and definite terms, that they had no earthly power to expect;—that their greatness was to consist in being every man's servant, and doing good to all, Matt. 20: 25—28. Mark 10: 42—45. Luke 22: 25—27, and pronounced the petition of the mother of James and John, that her sons might be exalted to the dignity of the first officers of state in the new monarchy, a *very foolish* one, Matt. 20: 20—22. Mark 10: 35—38. On this same occasion, he observed, that it was not his object to subdue all the nations of the earth to his control; that on the other hand, he was rather to become the servant of all, and offer his life in sacrifice for their good, Matt. 20: 28. Mark 10: 45. Of this offering his life in sacrifice, which is directly opposed to the idea that he intended to usurp the place of an earthly ruler over his people, or the human race, he spoke on every suitable occasion; and whenever he saw his disciples elated with bold and joyful expectations, respecting the approach of an earthly kingdom of splendor, in order to suppress such thoughts, he informed them particularly and directly, *that his end was near*, Luke 9: 43, 44. Matt. 16: 18, 19, comp. vs. 21—25. It is well known that he had his death in prospect during the latter part of his life, co-operated in hastening it, and went up to Jerusalem on purpose to die, Matt. 20: 17—19. John 11: 7—10; *—a circumstance

the phrase, *within you*, is opposed to every thing which strikes the senses; every thing external whatever, Rom. 14: 17. [It will not destroy the force of the passage, however, as a proof text in this case, if the other interpretation be given to it, defended in particular by E. S. Cyprian, *Warnung vor Gleichgültigkeit der Religg.*, S. 81—84, and it be rendered; "The kingdom of heaven in the person of the Messiah, has, without being recognized, already in silence made its appearance among you," (comp. John 1: 26,) since Christ opposed this noiseless appearance to the pomp of a political kingdom.]

* [Comp. Eusebius, *Demonstr. Evang.* III. 4. p. 108; Οὐδε ὁλως βιαιον ὑπεμεινε τελευτην, ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτο μονον ἐκων παρεδιδου τοις ἐπιβουλευουσι το σωμα—ἀφ'ετος και ἐλευθερος αὐτος ἀφ' ἐαυτου την ἐκ του

in itself sufficient to prove that he had no intentions of establishing an earthly monarchy. And in perfect accordance with this, he finally told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he had never aimed at the acquisition of external power, as then he should have armed his followers and put himself at their head, and not have so patiently surrendered himself up to his enemies, John 18: 36. More he could not have done to prove that *he neither shared in the prevailing expectations of his countrymen, nor ever intended to satisfy them*; and we may truly say, that the principal reason why he gave himself up into the hands of his enemies, and departed from the world by so early and ignominious a death, was, as soon as possible, and forever, to annihilate the idea, that it was his object to found an earthly kingdom, and to give a different direction to the thoughts, wishes, and efforts of his disciples and friends.*

§ 17. Now if the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus announced at the commencement of his public career, and which he came to found, was not an earthly monarchy, it must have been *a moral institution, a kingdom of truth and virtue*.

1. That the kingdom of God, which he intended to establish upon earth and fill with all nations, was actually such an institution, he repeatedly and plainly declared; and did it with such earnestness and animation, as to leave an impartial man no room to doubt that this was the sole object of the plan which engrossed his thoughts, and in the execution of which he labored and died. He commenced his ministry by demanding repentance, and a reformation of the corrupt morals then prevalent, *because the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. This was the purport of almost the first sentence that he uttered, Matt. 4: 17.

σωματος ἀναχωρησιν ἐποιεῖτο and C. C. Flatt, Lässt sich der Tod Jesu aus einem rationalist. Gesichtspuncte betrachten? in Süsskind's Magazin, XII. 1—24, together with the supplement, in Bengel's Archiv, I. 1. 17—45, compared with C. L. Nitzsch, De Mortis a J. C. appetitae necessitate morali, Wittenb. 1810—11.]

* [A most decisive proof, that Christ was free from all thoughts of a worldly power, is derived from the history of the temptation, in

From it even his disciples could at first discover but little relative to the object before him, or intimating that they should so soon be obliged to share in his labors, and assist in also preaching repentance, Mark 6: 12. When he called them from the employment of fishermen, he told them, that, from henceforth, they should catch men, Mark 1: 17. Luke 5: 10 ;* and the commissions, which he intrusted to them, most clearly prove this catching of men to have been winning them and obtaining possession of them for moral purposes. When the attention which he had excited among the people was such as to furnish him with opportunity for discoursing to them more at large, he made it the principal object and the genuine spirit of of all he said, to impart moral information, and he told them in every possible way, sometimes in plain words, at others, in striking parables, that he had the moral improvement of mankind in view, and that nothing but a love of truth and virtue would ever entitle a man to the right of citizenship in the government about to be established. The very first of his discourses in detail, which has been preserved by Matthew, chap. 5—7, is full of such assertions. It is entirely composed of moral precepts and contains Christ's annunciation of himself as an improver of morality and a decided opposer of the Pharisees, who were its chief corruptors among the people. In the very beginning of it, he assures them that the kingdom of heaven was particularly designed for such poor men as the apostles were, Matt. 5: 3, comp. chap. 15: 23, 24 ;†—

which we are told that he rejected the proposed plan for obtaining worldly power with the greatest disdain as something satanic, and altogether at variance with the designs of God, Matt. 4: 8—10. The passage will prove this, even if taken as a parable ; which, however, is altogether inadmissible, since it is indirect opposition to all the natural rules of a parable, to unite a historical person with those that are merely feigned ; and whenever Christ speaks of himself in parables, he represents himself under a fictitious personage.]

* Vid. Euthymius Zigabenus and Grotius at this passage.

† That this passage must be understood of those who were destitute of wealth and power, has been shown by Grotius in a manner which places it beyond all reasonable controversy. [The explanation which Grotius gives of Matt. 5: 3, is hardly tenable. He does not

men, who felt a lively zeal in the cause of virtue and piety and were ready to endure persecutions in it, v. 10. Mark 8: 34, 35. Luke 6: 22, 23;—men, who looked for their reward in another world, and thus participated in the lot of those, who had labored and suffered in this cause before them, v. 12. It is obvious, that the qualities which Jesus here requires of his followers, stood in direct opposition to the sensual expectations of his countrymen, and had reference solely to a moral institution. The admonitions and warnings, given in the subsequent part of the discourse, relate purely to objects of a moral character. It is particularly worthy of remark, that in v. 20, he expressly declares that every thing must be entirely changed in a moral point of view from what it had hitherto been, for that the virtue of the Pharisees which had been so highly exalted, and for which his countrymen felt the greatest esteem, was far too imperfect ever to fit a man for the kingdom of heaven. This he proved very circumstantially, by unfolding the true meaning of some of the main precepts of morality and representing them in all their sanctity, in order thus to exhibit the little agreement there was between them and the conduct of the Pharisees, chap. 5: seqq. 6: 18. Now as nothing could be more

indeed, contrary to all grammatical rules as it would be, connect *πνευματι* with *μακαριοι*, comp. Knapp, Scripta. var. arg. nr. XI. p. 400 seqq., but, what is equally incapable of being proved, by the spiritually poor, he understands those who bear their poverty with a pious and willing mind. Jesus evidently speaks of those, who, (comp. Isaiah 61: 1. Luke 4: 18. Matt. 11: 25,) confess their ignorance, unworthiness, and spiritual inability; and hence, what follows in the 4th verse, respects those who mourn over their internal misery. In the introduction to the sermon on the mount, there is a short abstract given of all the gradations of Christianity from its commencement to its perfection, and the close connexion which it exhibits, requires that all the members of this chain, and of course the first, should designate a spiritual quality. It is evident, however, that thus interpreted, this passage is equally good, if not better than in the other case, as a proof-text respecting the object of Jesus; for *this perfect self-resignation*, which the Gospel requires as the first condition, ridiculed though it be indeed by the natural man, such for instance as a Julian was, points out more than any thing else, the purely spiritual character of Christ's kingdom.]

directly opposed to a system of morality, so pure, than the selfishness of the Jews, which looked for earthly gain in the kingdom of the Messiah, Jesus urges them to make a more correct estimate of the good things of this life, and consider every thing of inferior importance to the kingdom of heaven, which had already begun, and make it the principal object of their exertions to obtain admission into this kingdom, chap. 6: 19—34. He also adds that a man's merit can be determined only by his obedience to God, and hence only by his virtue, and not by his adherence to the founder of this kingdom, or his efforts to extend it, chap. 7: 21—23. It is impossible, therefore, for any one to declare in stronger language, that the object which he has in view is altogether of a moral nature, than Jesus has done it, in the very first complete discourse which he delivered in public.

2. With this, the figurative descriptions which Christ has given of the kingdom of God in his parables, Matt. 13: 3 seqq. Mark 4: 2 seqq. Luke 8: 4 seqq., have a very exact correspondence. They are the delineations of an institution in which every thing is adapted to improve mankind and render them happy. In another place, he pronounces those the best fitted for the kingdom of God, who possess a feeling of universal benevolence and an anxious desire for the advancement of moral dignity and perfection, Matt. 18: 1—14. Mark 9: 33—37; and, as the rich are too often deficient in these respects, he declares it almost impossible for them to enter the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 19: 23, 24. Mark 10: 23—25. This expression would have been altogether inappropriate, had the kingdom of God been any thing but a moral institution, requiring personal sacrifice and self-denial. In order to divest his language of all ambiguity, and tell his hearers in the plainest manner possible, that none must suppose this kingdom to contain any thing sensual, he assures them that its seat is in the inner man, Luke 17: 21, and requires every one desirous of partaking in it, to exhibit, not the courage and bravery of a hero, but the teachableness and simplicity of a child, Luke 18: 16, 17. Mark 10: 15, 16.

3. If with these we connect those assertions found especially in John, it will be impossible for a doubt to remain that the kingdom which Jesus was establishing, and by which he intended to improve the condition of the whole world, was a kingdom of truth and morality. Soon after he entered upon his ministry he held a remarkable conversation with a Samaritan woman, in which he felt at liberty to express himself with far more freedom respecting his own particular views than he was accustomed to do in the presence of his countrymen, whose prejudices he was obliged to spare. On this occasion he entirely laid aside the Hebrew phrase, the *kingdom of God*, and instead of it, spoke of the *worship of God* in spirit and in truth as then about to be introduced into all parts of the world without regard to the distinctions of nation and country, John 4: 23, 24. The Jews expected of the Messiah the restoration of their *freedom*. Jesus promised freedom, but a freedom from the tyranny of vice, to be obtained by the power of the truth, John 8: 31—36. Shortly before his death he conversed with his friends respecting the great work for which he had selected them, and in which they were soon to engage. For their encouragement and support he promised them nothing but *the Spirit of truth*. This was not only to guide them, but through them to teach and reform the whole world, John 14: 17, 26. 15: 26. 16: 13. Whatever we understand by this Spirit of truth, we must admit it to have been given to the apostles to prepare them for the moral undertaking, the accomplishment of which had been intrusted to their hands. I have already observed that in the presence of Pilate, Jesus declared his kingdom to be a kingdom of truth and not of this world, nor intended to injure the power and authority of its rulers in the least degree. That it was his intention to benefit all men by laboring in the cause of morality, is a position fully confirmed by the fact that he speaks in express terms of a new birth, an entire reformation and renovation of the heart, and in the most direct and definite manner, declares his intention to create mankind anew and make them better. In Matt.

19: 28, he calls the new order of things which he had in contemplation, a regeneration, and that this regeneration was not to be a political change nor a resuscitation of the old national constitution, he asserted in a manner worthy of the deepest attention, in the well known dialogue which he held with Nicodemus, John 3: 1 seqq. He told the astonished scribe, with the dignity of an ambassador of God, who was conscious of being engaged in the most important business and felt his appropriate sphere of action to be without the bounds of the corporeal world, vs. 11—13, that a man must be renovated by the influences of a better religion before he could be admitted into the kingdom of God, v. 3; that indolent human nature, altogether sunk as it was in sensuality, must experience an entirely new birth in order to become *spirit* and awake to a higher moral life, vs. 4—6;* not that there was any lack of spiritual faculties, for they were every where in action, but that they were destitute of the proper direction. He told Nicodemus that they should now receive the proper direction by means of the new birth under the influences of this better religion, v. 8;† that though it would

* [Comp. the author's sermon, J. 1799. I. am Feste der Dreyeinigkeit, nr. 22. S. 442 ff; "The intention of Jesus to improve mankind by means of a new moral creation."]

† There is not the least reason for all at once giving the word *πνεῦμα*, a meaning, in this place, different from what it has at the end of the 6th verse. There it is used in reference to the moral powers of human nature, which by means of a higher influence in connexion with the religion, are put into appropriate action; by which means man is rendered a better being and exalted above the objects of sense. Now here in the 8th verse it is said that these same moral powers, capable of being animated and directed are every where in action, as well in the heathen world as among the Jews, and that their language and indications in human nature cannot possibly be mistaken; that these powers had hitherto been destitute of a definite direction, and not operated with the requisite regularity; and that the formation of these irregular powers by means of the better religion, and the higher assistance connected with it, is the object now in view. Many ancient and modern interpreters have found it hard to understand the word *πνεῦμα* of the wind, in opposition to the context and the *usus loquendi* of the N. T. in other places. Comp. Suicer's *Thesaurus Eccles.* Tom. II. p. 780 and Wolf's

cost him his life to effect this great and universal change, yet his death should result in the salvation of all mankind, v. 14, for that he came to make all happy who adhered to him and were willing to be improved; to do good to all mankind without exception, vs. 15—17, and hence, that none should remain miserable but those who hated the truth, and out of a love to vice, rejected it, vs. 18—21. Jesus therefore had a new moral creation in view. His object was to animate all mankind with better life;—to arouse, direct, and ennoble their spiritual faculties, and exalt the human race to a state of moral dignity and happiness. This was the kingdom of God which he had in view,—the important work which occupied his

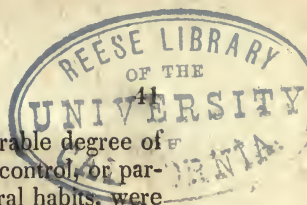
Curæ, at this passage. They have not understood the connexion of thought however, as it must be understood, if we give that word its figurative meaning. [The old Lutheran rendering of πνεῦμα, however, by *wind*, derives firm support from the fact, that ὁὕτως at the end of the verse, points to a preceding parable, or comparison. Comp. Knapp, l. c. nr. VI. p. 224 seqq. A meaning different from the Scriptural usage does seem to be here imputed to the word πνεῦμα, as it generally means the divine Spirit and its operations. That the comparison which Christ has chosen for an illustration, is a very striking one, has been clearly shown by Heinr. Müller in his Evangel. Hertzenspiegel, upon this portion of Scripture.] [The paraphrase which Reinhard has given of these verses may appear somewhat obscure. It is proper to observe, therefore, that in the 5th and the first instance of the 6th verse, he evidently understands πνεῦμα, to mean the spirit of God, but in the last instance of the 6th and in the 8th, the moral powers of man. His views of regeneration are well expressed in his Dogmatik. 'The Scriptures clearly teach us,' says he in that work, 'that notwithstanding the possession of excellent faculties for doing good, we shall never be able to attain to that perfection which the Gospel requires, without the especial assistance of God, and attribute the whole work of regeneration to the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. Tit. 3: 4—6. Gal. 6: 15. Rom. 8: 1—14 &c. We are authorized, therefore, to assert, that man can neither effect his own conversion, entirely by his own strength, according to the views of the Pelagians, nor commence it by his own strength, according to those of the Semi-Pelagians, and are constrained to admit, that every thing in this respect depends upon divine grace.' §§ 82, 83, 123, and 148, in the last of which, he has given a more particular explanation of these verses. For the various explanations that different interpreters have given of them, consult the commentaries of Paulus and Kuinoel, and Tittmann's Meletamata Sacra. Tr.]

his mind. It is necessary still farther to explain the principal heads which Jesus included under this change agreeably to his own remarks.

§ 18. *Religion, morality, and society*, are the three great topics which exert the most influence in the formation of character, and make men, what they are. *Religion*, when Jesus began his career, was, *throughout the world*, nothing but a miserable superstition. *Morality* was either neglected, or had been corrupted by principles which either *relaxed* or *exaggerated* its claims. Finally, the *social relations* were in the greatest disorder, and so unhappily regulated, as to evince a spirit of hostility in all their parts and appear to have been calculated for mutual subjugation. If then Jesus intended to create mankind anew, and radically improve the condition of the world; to establish a genuine kingdom of God upon earth and collect all nations into it, it was necessary for him to destroy superstition and substitute true religion in its stead;—to purify morality, adapt it to human nature, and procure for it a universal influence;—and finally, to act upon the social relations, and without directly attacking civil constitutions, diffuse a spirit over the earth, which should gradually rectify abuses, fill it with universal peace, and elevate human nature to the greatest perfection of which it is capable. —It can be shown that such was the undertaking which Jesus actually had in contemplation, and the particular character of his plan becomes perfectly obvious, as soon as we know his designs in reference to it, and what he intended to accomplish.

RELIGION.

§ 19. That the religion of the human race, when Jesus made his appearance upon earth, was in reality nothing better than a senseless superstition, hardly needs any proof. All mankind were then divided into Jews and gentiles. Among the heathen; the Greeks and Romans



were the only two nations of any considerable degree of cultivation. All, that were not under their control, or partakers of their sciences, regulations, and moral habits, were in a *greater or less degree of barbarity*. Now that what was called *religion* among the *barbarous* nations of that age, was incontestibly nothing but a senseless and false belief, prejudicial to morality and happiness, may be ascertained either from looking at the representations of which it was composed, or at the ceremonies and regulations connected with its practice. There is no kind of idolatry, which was not to be met with among these nations. Here Fetichism prevailed, there Sabianism; here the worship of the brute creation, there the worship of fire; here the adoration of heroes and demons, there the adoration of allegorical divinities. In most places, many of these errors were to be found at the same time, and in connexion with almost every degradation to which human nature is liable, and every species of cruelty and wild extravagance, that can be thought of. The public religion of the *Greeks* and *Romans* was not much better. It was Polytheism, under the oppressive dominion of which, the great mass of the people remained in total ignorance of every thing belonging to the true worship of God. True, there were philosophers in both nations who sought to break away from the senseless, though popular belief then prevalent, and aspired after better notions and more correct views. Many of them, however, wandered while they aspired, rejected all religion, and took up with comfortless infidelity. Others gave themselves up to skepticism, and declared the existence of a Supreme being, his influence in human affairs, and our existence after death, to be problems which man is wholly unable to solve. The best of them always retained errors which cannot be reconciled with a purified knowledge of religion, and which did not fail to produce injurious effects in regard to life and conduct. All without exception agreed that the prevailing religion should be respected, and its regulations and ceremonies attended to, for the honor of the civil constitution to which it belonged. Upon such principles it was impossible for

the more correct views which had been struck out by philosophizing reason, ever to come into *general circulation*, even among the Greeks and Romans. Hence they always remained the property of the few who had been initiated into the secrets of science. The great mass of the people not only continued in total ignorance, but were induced to hold fast their unbelief with the more obstinacy and confidence, from seeing philosophers publicly profess the name.

And what shall we say of the Jews? They were free indeed in the times of Christ from the errors of Polytheism and idolatry, but they had changed the worship of the only true God into slavish ceremonies as much opposed to genuine religion, and as prejudicial to morality, as idolatry itself. The Jews used to look upon God as a despot, whose commands are arbitrary, and who is governed in all he does, by passionate self-will. They proudly conceived themselves to be the chosen people of God, and preferred by him to all others. By a false and fanciful interpretation of the Mosaic law, they had been seduced into the erroneous belief, that the most meritorious services a man can perform, and the very essence of religion, consist of corporeal exercises and sacred ceremonies. They trembled before even the God whose favorites they thought themselves, with boundless arrogance, despised the heathen, and fancied themselves holy, if, notwithstanding the grossest vices, and the wildest extravagances, they fasted diligently, offered sacrifice, and yielded obedience to the foolish superstitions of their fathers. So corrupt therefore were the moral habits of the people, so wretched was their entire condition, and so hateful and odious were they in the eyes of other nations, that they sincerely felt their need of extraordinary aid, and hence were most anxiously looking out for the Messiah from whom they expected it. Under such circumstances we shall not go too far in saying, that the spirit of true religion had vanished from the world in which Jesus made his appearance;—that the pernicious influence of superstition controlled every thing;—and that a mighty body of priests, whose welfare and

authority depended upon this influence, was incessantly engaged in preserving and strengthening it.*

§ 20. One of the principal objects contemplated in the plan of Jesus, was, to provide a remedy for these evils, destroy every kind of superstition, and, by the extension of religious truth, make the world acquainted with a rational worship of God. For this purpose he declared the great doctrine of *one only true God*, to be the foundation of all religion, and represented himself as God's delegate, commissioned to unite all men in his worship and thereby render them happy, John 17: 1—3. Matt. 28: 18, 19. By the general promulgation of this fundamental truth, all kinds of heathenish superstition were to be forever extirpated, and a conviction, which had hitherto been the exclusive property of the Jews and of enlightened philosophers among the heathen, to become the faith of the whole human family, the prevailing *popular belief*. In order to prepare this great doctrine still farther for universal promulgation, and make it more influential upon mankind, Jesus represented the only true God as a father;—not in the sense in which this phrase had sometimes been employed among the Jews and heathen, who by it designated the *author*, the *creator* and the *lord*;† but to

* [With reference to these points, consult Hess, Lehre, Thaten, and Schicksale unsers Herrn, I. nr. 1. and 6; and introductions to the history of the Christian church, particularly Neander's Allg. Gesch. der christl. Relig. I. 1. S. 1—90; "The general condition of the Romano-Greek and Jewish world in a religious point of view, at the time of the first appearance and the farther extension of Christianity."]

† This appellation is met with as early as Deut. 32: 6, and with reference to this passage, the prophets, vid. Isa. 63: 16. 64: 8. Jer. 3: 19. and Mal. 1: 6. 2: 9, 10, make use of the same. The passage, Ps. 103: 13, approaches the nearest to the representation which Jesus afterwards connected with this word; where, however, God is not *called* a father, but *compared* to a father. Among the Greeks, the word *father* frequently meant the *author*, the *inventor*, the *creator* of a thing; comp. Casaubonus, Zum Athenäus Deipnos. I. I. c. 1. p. 3 seq. der Leipz. Ausg., and in this sense Plato calls God the Father of all," in Timaeo, p. 303. der Zweybr. Ausg. [Tom. IX.] Equally common was it for the Greeks to employ this word to designate the *ruler*, the *governor*, the *most celebrated*, the *chief*, and hence in Ho-

express the disposition and feeling of God towards mankind, and declare in the most intelligent and impressive manner, that God had not only given men their existence, but that he stood in the relation to them of an educator and benefactor, loved them, took care of them, and was seeking to conform them to his image and make them eternally happy, Matt. 5: 44—49. 6: 9—13, 25—33, and

mer, II. I. 544. III. 276. 365, &c., Jupiter is almost always called "the father of gods and men," and Plato substitutes the word *king* in its stead, Epist. II. p. 69. [Tom. XI.,] with which compare Callimachus, in Iov, v. 7. and 94. With respect to the last passage, Spanheim is also to be consulted. The Romans imitated this, and not only called the supreme God, *father*, vid. Horace, Odar. l. I., od. 2. v. 2, and Virgil, Georg. l. I. 283, but made this the common appellation of every other divinity, in doing which they were influenced by reverence. Vid. Serv. on Virg. Geo. l. II. 4. From this appellation, Lanctantius, Insti. Divinar. l. IV. c. 3, draws conclusions in opposition to Polytheism, and the illustrations which he gives in this respect, deserve to be examined by every one, who would obtain a right apprehension of the meaning that the ancients attached to the word *father*, when applied to Deity. [Garve, indeed, in his Vermischte Aufsätze, II. 342 ff., has expressed a doubt whether the idea of God as a father of mankind, was first promulgated by Christianity, but without bringing forward any definite testimony to the contrary. If we pass over the word, however, and treat merely of the idea itself, Christianity will unquestionably appear to deserve the credit of having revealed God as a father, in a sense, in which he was neither known to the heathen world nor to the Old Testament. Among the ancient poets, we discover no intimations of a deep moral element in this appellation, and even in the writings of the philosophers, who made the nearest approach in this respect to the Christian notion, as Plutarch, for instance, Vita Alexandri, c. 27. Opp. ed. Reisk. IV. 67; De Superstit., VI. 639, we search in vain for a complete developement of it. In other places on the other hand, the word occurs in a merely physical sense, as in Plutarch's Apophthegm. Opp. VI. 686., and also Arrian's Dissert. Epictet. ed. Schweighæus. I. 3, 9, &c. And though Niemeyer in his Briefe an christl. Relig. Lehrer, Saml. 2. S. 63 ff. (1ste Ausg.) asserts that the Christian idea attached to the word is clearly to be met with in the Old Testament, yet it cannot be proved. There God is not merely called the father of the Israelitish nation, but called so expressly as the deliverer of this nation, and the founder of its politico-religious constitution. In the New Testament, on the other hand, God is represented as a father, who gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke 11: 13. comp. Rom. 8: 14. Heb. 12: 7 seqq. As this Spirit was not poured out until the gospel began to exert its influence, so the complete sense of the paternal name of God was not made manifest until then.]

that they must strive to become his children, by imitating him in holiness and perfection, Matt. 5: 19, 45. John 1: 12.

§ 21. By the representation which Jesus in this way gave of the doctrine of one only and supreme God—a representation which was peculiar to him, and which with a striking uniformity pervades all his discourses, *very important objects were to be accomplished*. He intended to exhibit it with such clearness and simplicity that those of the weakest capacities, even children, might comprehend it. Instead therefore of remaining a subject of fruitless speculation, a problem for the examination of reason, it was to be made an animating and efficient truth, exerting a practical influence upon the heart and life. The touching representation which Jesus gave of God by calling him *father*, was at the same time to do away those frightful images under which both Jews and gentiles had contemplated the Deity, and substitute a childlike confidence, a heartfelt love, instead of that slavish mortification and the service extorted by fear, which had usually been thought necessary for appeasing him and retaining his favor. In particular, the priests, those promoters and protectors of superstition, who had hitherto claimed for themselves the authority of an indispensable mediatorship between God and man, and thus rendered themselves of very great importance, *were to be deprived of their influence forever*; for he, who knows God to be a condescending and affectionate father, can apply to him directly, and needs not a prior introduction from such mediators and confidants.

As a necessary result of the views,* which Jesus thus inculcated upon the people respecting God, he required them to worship him in spirit and in truth, John 4: 23, and made true religion to consist purely in efforts to become like him, Matt. 5: 48, and obedience to the moral law, Matt. 7: 21—23. Here then all sacrificial services fell at once to the ground, for the supreme Father of all neither needs nor requires any such presents of his children. All

* [For similar remarks, vid. Niemeyer, Briefe anchrist. Religion-lehrer, Saml. 1. Brief 9. S. 85 ff.]

the other exercises, ceremonies, and regulations, to which in every religion so much importance had been attached, were in like manner deprived of their value. Ceremonies could neither be retained nor tolerated, any farther than they might serve as the means of advancing true morality, Mark 7: 5—23. Matth. 6: 1—18. For the same reason, the worship of God could no longer be confined to any particular place. The Father of all is not partial to single regions or particular classes of men. All the world therefore was to become his temple, and the whole human race his family, John 4: 20—24. Matth. 5: 43—48. And finally, all those distinctions were to cease which had originated in numberless forms of superstition and idolatry, and filled the nations of the earth with aversion to each other, and often with mutual hatred and contempt, John 10: 16.

§ 22. Of especial importance, however, were the results, which Jesus deduced from the fundamental representation that God is the Father of men, in order to show the relations existing between him and his rational creatures. A father possessed of genuine paternal affections, naturally exercises a very tender care over his children ;—a care which extends to all the wants, circumstances, and events of their lives. Jesus exhibited God as exercising a similar care over mankind. The notions that he inculcated upon this subject, were, that without the will of God, not a sparrow, as it is expressed, not a hair of our head, can fall to the ground, Matt. 10: 29—32 ; that God never ceases to exert the most effectual influence in all the occurrences of life, John 5: 17 ; to do good to every thing that exists, and hold man as an object of his attention in particular esteem, Matt. 6: 24—34. 5: 45. The view which Jesus in this way gave of the superintending care of God, together with the childlike confidence which he sought to instil into men towards their heavenly Father, left no room for those doubts, so common in the schools of the philosophers, respecting the reality, universality, and beneficence of a divine Providence, or those cheerless representations, so prevalent among the great mass of un-

educated people, respecting the power of a blind fortune, an irregular chance, and a severe and inexorable fate, which sometimes rendered them negligent, at others filled them with presumption or despair.—Fathers are very forbearing towards the faults of their children, and ready to forgive them as soon as they discover signs of reformation. Jesus gave a most exalted description of the love of the supreme Father in this respect, his reconcileableness and willingness to forgive sin, and the anticipating kindness with which he meets all who repent and amend, Luke 15: 1—32. Matt. 18: 21—35. John 3: 16, 17. Of course, this took away all need of expiatory sacrifices, solemn purifications, painful courses of penance, and the various means which had thus far been resorted to, for appeasing the incensed Deity, and averting the punishment of sin, and exhibited them in the light of base superstitions.—Finally, nothing is dearer to fathers than the life and preservation of their children. The supreme Father can preserve forever, and confer immortality. Jesus therefore spoke with greater energy, confidence, and expression of the immortality and boundless duration of the soul, than any one had ever done before him. He every where intimated that he himself stood in a close and perpetual connexion with a higher world, an invisible order of things, John 1: 52. 3: 13. 6: 51. 8: 23, and hence that to him death was nothing more than a return to this better, this more exalted sphere, John 16: 28. At the same time he asserted that all men were destined to this kingdom of immortality, and that it was his business to conduct them thither, Matth. 6: 19—21. 10: 28. 25: 21—46. Luke 16: 19—31. John 3: 16. 5: 24. 10: 27—30. 14: 2, 3. 17: 24. Hence he never undertook to prove the immortality of the soul. Instead of doing so, he spoke of it as something which could not be a matter of doubt. He spoke of it as a citizen of this kingdom of immortality, and one acquainted with it from actual experience. His discourses always breathed the spirit and power of a better world, excited deep feelings in all who approached him, and filled them with overpowering convictions of a

never ending state of existence. Hence nothing like doubts, respecting a future state, or that firm denial of it, so common to the age in which he lived, was ever to be met with among his followers. He who became a member of his church and felt the influence of his gospel, had a sense of immortality too vivid, and felt himself brought into a relation to heaven too close, ever to admit of his faith's being shaken, Phil. 3: 20, 21. It was Christ's intention, therefore, to destroy idolatry with all its abominations; to irradiate the night of profound ignorance that prevailed; to collect together and bring to light the truth found here and there in philosophical lecture rooms, or wrapt up in mysteries, and by exhibiting it in the clearest and most intelligible manner, and conveying it to the cottages of the ignorant and the low, to effect the greatest and most benevolent change that ever took place in the convictions of the human family.

MORALITY.

§ 23. Jesus however intended to operate with no less energy and impression upon the dispositions, feelings, and moral habits of mankind. Morality needed his aid as much as religion. Its character among the Jews at that time was extremely bad.* The Pharisees had transformed it into a subtle casuistry about religious ceremonies, and made it a patroness of the most pernicious hypocrisy. The Sadducees had reduced it to a lax system of prudential maxims for the use of frivolous and selfish sensualists, and the Essenes, to a gloomy asceticism, fit only for melancholy anchorites and pious enthusiasts. They all abandoned the common people to their uncurbed desires, and felt satisfied with themselves if they sacrificed diligently, observed the statutes of the fathers, and treated the heathen with bitter hatred and proud contempt. The sa-

* [Staudlin, *Gesch. d. Sittenlehre Jesu*, I. 419 ff.]

ered writings of the nation, indeed, contained great treasures of moral instruction, but they were as useless as if they had never been in existence. Immorality pervaded all ranks, broke up the relations of society, spread universal disorder, and had occasioned that decline of the Jewish state, which ended in the most fearful destruction.

The philosophers of Greece and Rome had devoted a great part of their efforts to the improvement of morality, and it cannot be denied that they had accomplished much and said many sagacious and excellent things. The morality of the heathen world, however, was very defective. Apart from the fact, that usually it either favored selfish principles, and constituted merely a system of rules for the gratification of the senses, or required an extravagant self-denial and greatness, which rendered man a proud and gloomy being and divested him of every thing like sympathy and kindness, it exerted no influence upon the great mass of common people, and had no one to procure for it such an influence. Its guardians satisfied themselves with disputing in their schools respecting what ought to constitute its fundamental principles, and left the people to their fate. It is worthy of particular remark, therefore, that the morality of the Greeks and Romans had little or no connexion with religion, and hence was absolutely destitute of that effective character and simplicity without which it cannot prove of any avail to the multitude. Among the other nations of the earth, morality derived its chief support from inherited customs, paternal ceremonies, and single maxims, often not more than half true; and even this, though always weak, was rendered still more insecure by the prevalence of superstition. These circumstances render it easy for us to perceive the force of the loud and unanimous complaints made by all the writers of those times,* respecting the universal, fearful, and al-

* [Testimonies to this effect are to be found collected together in interpreters upon Rom. 1: 24 seqq., particularly in Cornelius Adamus, *Exercitatt. Exegeticae*, nr. 5, *de malis Romanorum moribus ante praedicationem evangelii*; Meiner, *Geschichte des Verfalls der Sitten der Römer*, L. 1782; Dess. *Gesch. des Verfalls der Sit-*

most incurable corruption of morals. To remove this corruption from the very foundation, it was necessary to procure for morality a transforming influence, extensive, effectual, and almost directly opposite to what it had hitherto had; or, which is the same thing, to purify it, unite it with religion, and give it a perspicuity and power, which should render it intelligible and impressive to all mankind without exception. Now by examining the spirit and regulations, which, according to the testimony of history, morality received from Jesus, we shall be able to ascertain whether they furnished a remedy for these imperfections.

§ 24. The religion which Jesus intended to spread throughout the world, was a living faith in God. This God he called the Father of mankind, whom he represented as his children, and consequently as brethren; objects of his love and care, in a course of education for a better life, and destined to an eternal state of existence. It was natural that the morality of a person capable of giving such views respecting God, and our relations to him and each other, should resolve itself into a love to God and all his rational creatures. It did, so in reality. It cannot be doubted that Jesus reduced the whole system of morality, by which he intended to reform the world, to a grateful love to God, and a fraternal love to man. More than once he declares the commandment which enjoins such a love to be the principal one in the moral law, and to comprehend all the rest, Matt. 22: 35—40. Mark 12: 28—31. Luke 10: 25—29. Hence he goes so far as to make this love the only sure test of his followers, John 13: 34, 35, 12—17. Every thing that he teaches respecting the disposition and feeling of God towards his rational creatures, is adapted to awaken and cherish an internal and grateful love in their breasts towards him, Matt. 5: 49. 6: 25—33. 7: 7—11. John 3: 16, 17, 10: 17, 18, &c. The duty of loving all mankind is exhibited in so

ten, der Wissensch. u. s. w. in den ersten Jahrhunderten nach Christi Geburt, Wien, 1791; Nachträge zu Sulzer von Manso u. A., IV. 443 ff. VI. 81 ff. 294 ff; Scheibel, Beyträge zur Kenntniss der alten Welt, II. 1—110.]

clear and perspicuous a manner, in the exalted and touching representations, which he has given of the worth and dignity of human nature, as to force itself upon those who are most unaccustomed to think, Matt. 18: 10, 11. John 3: 16, 17. Luke 10: 25—37. Matt. 25: 31—46. He required a practical exhibition of this love in such strong terms, expressed himself upon the subject so frequently and so clearly, and illustrated, animated, and confirmed what he said upon the subject in so impressive and touching a manner by his own example, that in the end his apostles also unanimously agreed in preaching this love, and called it the royal commandment, the fulfilling of the whole moral law, the summary of all true perfection, the highest point of greatness to which a man can attain, and something which will put him in possession of an eternal excellence, 1 John 2: 6—11. 3: 10—18. 4: 7—21. 5: 1—3. 1 Pet. 3: 8, 9. Rom. 13: 8, 10. Gal. 5: 17. Col. 3: 14. 1 Tim. 1: 5. 1 Cor. 13 to the end. James 2: 8.

§ 25. Jesus has not left what he meant by this love unexplained. His own love to God was the most punctual obedience to the will of God. He evinced it by doing his Father's commandments, and voluntarily giving himself up to a most ignominious execution, for the purpose of fulfilling the divine commission which he had received from the Father, John 4: 34. 10: 15—18. 14: 31. When therefore Jesus represented love to God as the principal commandment in the whole system of morality, he did not by any means speak merely of a play of devout feelings and pious emotions, nor of an enthusiastic mortification of one's self, and vain efforts after a union with God, a perfect coalescence with the being of God; the love which he had in view, and declared to be the substance of all morality, was a voluntary obedience to the will of God, and a faithful observance of all his commandments. Hence he recognises that man only as a worthy citizen of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 7: 21, who does the will of the Father in heaven, without which obedience he positively assures us, that the most zealous

exhibition of religion is of no manner of value, Matt. 7: 22, 23. 'He who loves me,' says Jesus, 'loves the Father also, for I am his messenger,' John 14: 9. He makes love to himself, however, to consist solely in keeping his commandments, which he represents as none other than the sacred commandments of God and duty, John 14: 15, 21, 23, 24, and in order to give a still more intelligible view of what he calls love to God, he requires men to exhibit the dispositions and feelings of children, towards God in their actions, Matt. 5: 45. This however can mean nothing else than that they are to go to the extent of their ability in attending to the will of their heavenly Father, rendering themselves at all times worthy of his approbation, regulating their conduct by his example, and striving to be equally perfect, Matt. 5: 44—48. Luke 6: 27—36; for, says the favorite apostle, and of course the one likely to have the best apprehension of his Master's meaning, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," 1 John 5: 3. To love God then, agreeably to the very definite explanations which Jesus himself has given of the subject, is to yield a perfectly willing, pure, and punctual obedience to his holy and benevolent will, as exhibited in the different laws of morality; and a man proves that he possesses love to God, when he strives to become perfect and holy like God.*

* [The foregoing observations will furnish a sufficient refutation of the objections which have been raised respecting the doctrine of love in God and love to God, in the work, "God is the purest love," Benvenuto's Zweifel vor dem Tribunale der höhern Religionskritik niedergelegt von Röhling, S. 77 ff., Frankf. a. M. 1803, in which, S. 42 ff., the author goes so far as to assert that John accommodated himself to the religion founded in love after the manner of the Greeks, (dass Johannes sich zur graecissirenden Liebes-Religion bequemt habe!) [Does the author refer to Platonic love, the principles of which were adopted by the Mystic sects, and early introduced into Christianity? Vid. Neander, Kirch. Geschichte, I. 1. S. 31 seqq., 60 seqq., and various works referred to by Reinhard, System der christl. Moral, B. II. § 180, An. a. Röhling is not at hand. Tr.]

[The expression "God is love," 1 John 4: 16, is probably derived from that of Christ, John 3: 16, as its source. That love can never be exacted by command, S. 119 ff., might be considered as a valid ob-

Hence also it follows, that the love to one's neighbour or fellow creature, which Jesus connected with love to God, and made of equal importance, Matt. 22: 37—39, cannot be a mere trifling with philanthropical emotions or an idle exhibition of kindness, but must consist in an activity which springs from a sense of duty and aims at public utility with an ardor that readily submits to personal sacrifices;—an activity, founded upon a lively regard for the worth and dignity of human nature, and a steadfast respect for God and his will. Such was the character of the philanthropy which Jesus himself exhibited, John 10: 11—18. Such a sympathizing spirit of activity, making, as it does, a man feel as great a solicitude for the welfare of others, as for his own, and leading him to do to others as he would that they should do to him, constitutes, as Christ expresses it, the essence of all that is contained in the Scriptures, Matt. 7: 12. It requires a man therefore to imitate God in the disinterestedness and extent of his benevolence as far as opportunity presents, and prohibits him entirely from neglecting those hostile to him and the vicious, in his efforts to do good, Matt. 5: 43—48.* He

jection to it, did not the law of God, as exhibited in the gospel, excite and strengthen a corresponding love in man, and impart to him a spirit which transforms the obligation of duty into the pleasure of the will. For the same reason, Christ's command respecting love, cannot be confined to a mere cold esteem for morality according to Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphys. der Sitten*, S. 13; *Kritik der pract. Vernunft*, S. 144 ff. *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen d. bl. Vern.*, S. 242. 2e A. *Comp. Reinh. Syst. d. Moral*, B. II. §173 seqq.]

* [That the command to love enemies, as regards its compass, and pure, religious spirit, was first made known by Christianity, is evident from comparing it with the doctrines of the old philosophers. Vid. Hupeden, *Commentatio, qua comparatur doctrina de amore inimicorum Christiana cum ea, quæ in V. T. et in philosophor. Græcor. ac Romanor. scriptis traditur*, Gottin. 1817; Meyer, *Doctrina Stoicor. ethica cum Christiana comparat.* p. 88—99, Gott. 1823. "We may boldly challenge the most thoroughly read investigator of antiquity to point out a single passage in all its writings, in which this duty is explained and recommended in so clear, impressive, appropriate, and fine a manner. One needs but a slight acquaintance with the spirit of Grecian and Roman antiquity, even when the most cultivated and refined, to be able to infer a priori that it could never produce any such fruit." Krug, *Briefe über die Perfectibilität der geoffenb. Religion*, S. 340 ff.]

is always to hold human nature in esteem, however low the grade in which he finds it, Matt. 18: 5, 10, 11. 10: 42, and, without regard to personal danger, be ready to assist all that stand in need of assistance, Luke 10: 25—37; or, according to John's explanation of his master's will, a man is not to love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth, 1 John 3: 18, and be ready to lay down his life for the brethren whenever it is necessary, 1 John 3: 16. The position: "Think, feel and act in such a manner as always to resemble God, the great archetype of all perfection, the supreme benefactor, and consider thy fellow creatures as thy brethren, and be ever upon the alert to do good," is the chief commandment, the one to which Christ has reduced every thing, and which he has laid at the very foundation of his system of morality.

§ 26. The more we think of the character which was in this way imparted to morality, the more we shall be convinced that it was an entirely new one, though such as it must ever have, in order to be adapted to our nature, and exert a salutary influence. In the first place, the general principle of love to God and man brought it into a relation to religion which it had never before sustained, and yet the only true and correct one. Before the time of Christ, religion and morality were separated; for the heathen had a morality, without religion, and the Jews a religion without morality, and hence the morality of the heathen was cold and powerless, and the religion of the Jews as well as that of the other nations of that age of the world a devout pomposity prejudicial to morality. The commandment which enjoins love, was employed by Jesus as a holy bond of union for inseparably and forever combining morality and religion together; for he who loves God and man is pious only when he is morally good, and he is never morally good without reference to God, whom in this respect, he strives to resemble. In his manner of thinking and acting, he cannot avoid keeping before his eyes the supreme lawgiver, benefactor and father, to whom he is indebted for all things, and of course, cannot avoid being religious. As the laws of morality are written on his heart, neither can

he avoid keeping them also, and thereby evincing, that he is a child of God, and of the same mind, and hence he cannot avoid being virtuous. The relation, which was in this way established between morality and religion, was not a subjection of one to the other, but a regular combination, a fraternal union of the two. Jesus did not found morality upon religion. He suffered it to rest upon its own principles, Matt. 7: 12. Neither did he found religion upon morality, for when he inculcated duties, he usually commenced with religious representations, John 4: 24, and then proceeded to point out those principles of religion which are not moral, Matt. 6: 26—29, John 3: 16; but he taught the two in connexion, by which means, he remedied the imperfections peculiar to each, so long as they were separated. It was only necessary for one to love God and man as Jesus did, in order to make the whole system of morality religious, and the whole system of religion moral, in which case, the former has an author, a lawgiver, and rewarder, and the latter becomes the friend of virtue, the supporter of integrity, and the dispenser of gentle consolation in all the calamities of life. Jesus, therefore, by making use of the commandment which enjoins love to God and man, and thus imparting to morality a new character, provided a remedy for one of its chief defects. Hitherto religion had been a stranger to it, and too often injurious. Now an alliance was formed between them which proved advantageous to both.

§ 27. For, by means of the commandment which enjoins love, Jesus also effected the purification of morality. Selfish principles, it is well known, prove death to every thing like genuine morality. They degrade it, make it subservient to our inclinations and lusts, and transform it into a system of common prudential maxims. It was the lot of morality to be generally thus degraded in the times of Christ. The spirit which animated it among the *Jews*, was an exceedingly base desire of reward, and a slavish fear of divine punishment; and more than one philosophical school among the *heathen* looked upon morality as nothing more than the art of perpetual enjoyment, and as far as possible, obtaining possession of every kind of pleasure and

gratification. By laying this commandment, therefore, at the foundation of his system of morality, Jesus forever delivered it from the spirit of selfishness; for he, who acts under the influence of love, neither fears for himself, nor has respect to personal gain. The very nature of true love leads him to disdain all such considerations. He, therefore, who loves God, is not influenced in his actions by the hope of a reward. What he does, is done solely because God wills it and approves of it. Recognising God also as his father, he feels no anxiety as to his own happiness. His destiny is in the hands of one, who knows better what is for the good of his children than they themselves, Matt. 6: 31, 32. Nor can he who loves mankind, allow himself to seek after his own profit merely, for true philanthropy is noble, self-denying, magnanimous. Indeed, it is impossible for a man, who loves his fellow creatures as brethren, to separate his interests from theirs; he is constrained by the principle itself, to make their cause his own. Finally, it is impossible for him, who loves mankind like the Father of all, who makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, Matt. 5: 44—48, and neither needs nor expects any return for his favors, ever to think of having reference to a reward in the performance of his social duties. Love to God and man unavoidably leads one to perceive that every thing good and right has an internal and independent value, and must be approved of, and performed without any respect to consequences; and he, who possesses it, feels himself called upon to act as God acts. He would dishonor himself, therefore, and offend God, should he allow himself to be first moved to the performance of his duty by the hope of his own gain.

§ 28. By means of the general principle of true love to God and man, however, Jesus not only happily rescued morality from the degradation to which selfishness had subjected it, but he firmly secured it against that fanaticism, extravagance, and false purity, with which it was inculcated, particularly by the Essenes among the Jews, and by the Stoics among the heathen. He, who loves

God as his father, has no need on that account of becoming a gloomy self-tormentor, and foregoing the enjoyment of the good presented him in the kingdom of nature. That careful abstemiousness and severity, which leads one ever to afflict himself, and suppress the innocent instincts implanted by God himself, is directly opposed to the childlike confidence, and firm disposition of mind, with which a father must be honored, who, without being self-willed, has scattered such a profusion of every thing that is good, beautiful, and calculated to impart enjoyment. Hence Jesus himself by no means contemned the gratification of the senses, Matt. 11: 18, 19 ; and in his use of the commandment which enjoins love, he employed the best possible means for opposing the extravagant opinion, so perceptibly at war with the whole construction of human nature, that the holiness of morality demands a degree of strength and equanimity which is incapable of being moved by advantage, or softened by sympathy, and, with a like indifference to pleasure and pain and disdain of reward, makes happiness consist in virtue alone. This love is not a cold esteem, an affair of scrutinizing reason merely, an insolent and selfish pride ; but, in its very nature, being connected with feelings of pleasure, confidence, gratitude, sympathy, and hope, it fills the heart with a sincerity, warmth, and zeal, which put all its powers into operation, and impart to them such an impulse as they must ever have in limited beings like ourselves, in order to be wrought up to the performance of any thing great. Finally, this love is never satisfied with confining its attention to itself, but it always seeks for objects of kindness in the external world, and, associating with them, endeavors to do them good. He, therefore, who possesses genuine love to God and man, does indeed with inviolable fidelity pursue that course, which his reason pronounces good, just, and pleasing to God, and which brings even his most beloved inclinations in subjection to the commands of duty ; but with all his caution, severity, and self-control in this respect, he is a man of feeling, full of cordial sympathy, susceptible of ev-

ery noble joy, and by no means indifferent to the condition of others. He knows that virtue is not the same thing as happiness, the virtuous often being entirely destitute of enjoyment; and that, as this depends in part upon circumstances beyond human control, he will in very many cases be unable to obtain it. In attending to the performance of his duties, therefore, he is by no means insensible to his own welfare, but feeling himself under the government of a Father who loves him, and can and will bestow upon him as many favors as he needs or is able to receive, he is altogether unconcerned about it. By means of the commandment, therefore, which enjoins love, morality was humanized without losing its sanctity, brought down without being degraded, and adapted to the sensitive part of our nature without being defiled, and in this way it was rendered the means of uniting the rational part of our nature and the sensitive together, ennobling the whole man, and preparing us for heaven without unfitting us for our earthly relations.

§ 29. It is hardly necessary for me to remark, that in this way morality obtained a clearness and perspicuity which it had never before possessed. Indeed nothing is more practical or intelligible, or richer in valuable results, than the commandment which enjoins love. The most unskilful person can ascertain from his own feelings, what is consistent or inconsistent with love to others. He has only to put himself in their situation, and ask what, under such circumstances, would be agreeable to himself, Matt. 7: 12, in order at once to clear up the darkest question; and that man who contemplates God as Jesus has taught us to do, —as the wisest, holiest, and best of fathers, aiming at the welfare and improvement of all men, and acquainted with the most secret exercises of the heart,—as judging every thought and action, Matt. 6: 6, and ever present and active in regulating and governing all things, that man will soon ascertain from his own conscience, what he must do in order to please God; and, in doubtful cases, under the influence of love to Him, always take the safest side, or that, by which his own passions and inclinations will

gain the least. By reducing the whole system of morality, therefore, to love to God and man, Jesus did not provide merely for the wants of the age in which he lived ; for as certain as it is, that no better way could have been invented for delivering morality from the corruptions with which it was then disfigured, so certain is it, that morality must always remain what Jesus made it, in order to be secured against laxity and extravagance, and retained with perfect holiness and purity in its practical and humanized character. If it be an object to give morality a scientific form, we can resolve the general principle into a still higher one, accurately develop the ideas which it contains and define them with all the strictness required by the most systematic connexion ; but we must not abandon it if we would avoid falling directly into an error ; for by changing the relation created between morality and religion by the principle of love, and subjecting the one to the other instead of making them co-ordinate, we rob morality of its independance or religion of its requisite ; and by rendering morality purer than the principle of love requires it to be, we fall into extravagancies, and obtain precepts for beings entirely different from ourselves.

§ 30. It was Christ's intention therefore to quicken and transform all his rational creatures, and fill them with new moral life, by imparting to them the spirit of true love to God and man. Even common love is capable of effecting wonders. It makes him who possesses it internally to a strong degree, as it were, another being, gives his faculties a lively and harmonious play, and puts every spring of existence in motion, under the influence of which, his spirit takes a higher flight, and he finds himself prepared to perform things, and overcome difficulties, from which he would otherwise have shrunk as impossible. In a far higher and nobler sense ought that moral and religious love with which Jesus intended to quicken all men, to effect wonders. It ought to awaken, animate, and direct all the powers of human nature, reduce them to a proper relation to each other, and give durability and energy to their external expressions. It ought to remove every obstacle, and

all aversion to the performance of the most difficult duties, and lead a man with willingness and hearty boldness, to bring the sacrifices which he owes to virtue, as gifts, and joyfully deposit them upon her altar. It ought to produce in him an inspiration in favor of whatever is good without enthusiasm, an exaltation of soul without extravagance, and a benevolent warmth of heart without wild-fire. Finally, it ought to bring together the different branches of the human family, so long and so unhappily estranged from each other, reconcile them together, and transform them into one firmly united, and happy family, devoted to the service of God.

SOCIETY.

§ 31. This is that very part of the character of the plan in which Jesus was engaged, which now remains to be considered. In order to create mankind anew, and radically improve their condition, it was necessary for Jesus to honor the social relations with his attention, and exert himself to stop up the sources of immorality and misery therein concealed. The spirit of selfishness, by its incessant activity, and the pernicious influence which it exerted over all, had, in the strict sense of the word, been the sole cause of filling society with disorder, and transforming its bonds of unity, as far as a great portion of its members were concerned, into galling chains. Where this prevails, —where men act without regarding the dignity of human nature and acknowledging the rights and claims of others, treat their fellow creatures simply as the means of advancing their own interests, and, with insatiable eagerness, appropriate every thing within their reach to themselves, there all justice is at an end; the weak submit to the strong, power and fraud decide, and slavery and oppression are inevitable. This was the hostile demon which governed the earth, or rather, which tormented it and filled it with desolation at the time of Christ. It had involv-

ed nations in continual war with each other, and by a long series of bloody campaigns, made Rome the mistress of the world. This demon had even prescribed to most nations their laws, as well as fixed their manners, customs, regulations, and habits, and rendered the grossest forms of injustice as it were sacred, by stamping upon them the false seal of rectitude and fairness. Hence the numerous favored ranks to be met with in almost every state of that age; hence all the horrors of slavery and bondage, and their degrading effects upon the morality of a large portion of mankind; hence the tyranny of the male sex over the female, and the abuses to which the latter were almost every where obliged to submit; hence the want of the domestic virtues universally manifest, and the unrestrained practice of infanticide; hence the pernicious influence of the priesthood, and the intolerant and even persecuting spirit which they evinced as soon as the prevailing superstition was attacked; hence the frequent revolutions and civil commotions, which shook now this, now that state, and seldom passed away without bloodshed; and finally, hence the prevalence of luxury and sensual extravagancies, which had extended to an unheard of degree among the cultivated nations of the earth, particularly among the Greeks and Romans, and which were daily advancing. In short, there was no social relation which had not felt the pernicious influence of selfishness, and been thrown into greater or less disorder, by means of odious passions.

§ 32. It was certainly not the intention of Jesus to meddle with political affairs and found new states. Indeed, he was necessarily restrained from interfering in any respect with the laws, regulations, and forms of civil society, by the boundless extent of his plan; for it would have been neither possible nor useful to force the same constitution upon all men, and compress them into one huge political body. Hence I have already remarked, that Jesus kept himself very far from every thing relating to civil legislation or the business of the state. I have shown that Jesus took great pains to correct the gross and sensual views which his countrymen entertained of the

kingdom of heaven and give them right apprehensions of it as a moral kingdom extending beyond the boundaries of this life. Finally, I have shown, and will soon do it again more in detail, that Jesus made special efforts to guard against every kind of political commotion, and all disorderly movements among the great mass of the people, and that the reason of his withdrawing so soon from the theatre of his public actions, was, to deprive the people of the possibility of adhering and appealing to him in justification of their violent deeds. Besides, the evils with which all the states of the world were then afflicted could not have been removed by political operations in the least degree. Such enterprises usually open new spheres of action for selfishness and the human passions, and seldom result in any thing but a change of old defects for others often greater.

§ 33. It was impossible, however, for one, who aimed at nothing less than the reformation and elevation of all men, and their improvement in every respect, to remain indifferent to their political relations. As the external, and especially the social condition of men, may be such as to prove either highly prejudicial or advantageous to their morals, Jesus must have made the temporal welfare of men an object of his solicitude. That he was not inattentive to this subject, he has intimated with sufficient plainness. He did indeed frequently remind his followers of the retributions of a future and better world, but it was not his object in so doing to render them insensible to the happiness of the present life, or negligent and indifferent as to its attainment. All that he required of them was, habitually to renounce this happiness whenever the higher interests of truth and virtue and the general good demanded such a sacrifice, Matt. 5: 11, 12. 10: 37, 38, while he assured them, that a faithful attention to these subjects would also result in their external prosperity, Luke 12: 31. Matt. 6: 33; that God would never fail to supply their temporal wants, so long as they were actuated by a living zeal in the discharge of their duty, Matt. 6: 24—32; and that the courage and manly firmness with which they adhered to the good cause in which they were engaged, and

defended it, would often prove the means of their preservation and deliverance, Matt. 10: 22. 24: 13. Luke 21: 16—19. Hence it was, that with reference to the advantages which his followers should derive from a virtuous course of conduct, the blessings to be diffused throughout society by a spirit of active, magnanimous, brotherly love, and with reference to the superiority and strength, which union and integrity should give them over their vicious contemporaries, already weakened by discord, and all the good effects naturally resulting from radical improvement, he promised them that they should inherit the earth, Matt. 5: 5,* obtain the dominion of the world, Luke 12: 32, and, in the new order of things, receive back again a hundred fold in return for all they lost by contending in the cause of virtue and truth, Matt. 19: 27—30. Mark 10: 28—31. Luke 28: 29; 30.

§ 34. None of the temporal advantages, however, with which Jesus encouraged his followers, were to be the spoils of bravery or conquest, but the fruit solely of a high degree of virtue. The victory which he promised them depended altogether upon their fraternal union and the superiority which they should obtain by their conduct in the cause of truth and uprightness. It was not necessary therefore for them to meddle in any way with the civil institutions then existing, and thus agitate the nations of the

* [Neither of these passages, in the interpretation of which the author appears to have followed Michaelis, if more correctly explained, should have been brought forward in this place; for if *to inherit the earth*, Matt. 5: 13, be taken in a worldly sense, it will not agree with the other promises, all of which refer to heavenly and eternal things. Had it been so understood, it would have excited an idea that the Messiah's kingdom was to be an earthly one, in which sense this promise was never fulfilled as regards Christians of the first century. There can be little doubt, therefore, that this promise refers to the truly permanent and heavenly country, the possession of which is expressed in phraseology borrowed from the acquisition of the ancient Canaan. Comp. Storr, Opusc. Academ. III. 13; Knapp, Scripta Var. Arg. nr. 14, p. 560. And how could *the kingdom*, Luke 12: 32, which it was the Father's good pleasure to give the little flock, be taken in this place in a sense, in which, as the author himself suggests, vid. p. 30, Christ was never accustomed to use this phrase?]

earth. On the other hand, it seemed rather desirable to leave them entirely to their own fate, and wait in anticipation of their rise or their fall, of their longer duration or their sudden destruction, from the influence of circumstances. No man had a more vivid sense of the imperfections of the Jewish constitution than Jesus. He predicted the unavoidable overthrow of this state in more intelligible language than any who ever preceded him, and was firmly resolved himself to abolish the religious regulations then in existence. Nevertheless he submitted to the laws of his country as long as they were in force, Matt. 17: 24—27, told others to do the same, Matt. 22: 21, and went so far as to honor the ceremonies of the Levitical service in the worship of God, Matt. 8: 4. Luke 17: 14, and exhort his disciples and the people to pay suitable deference to those who occupied the place of public teachers, Matt. 23: 2. Religion thus far, both among the Jews and heathen, had constituted an essential part of the civil regulations. All the kingdoms of the old world were in a certain respect theocratical, and hierarchical. Every where, there existed a state religion, which was endowed with privileges and armed with power, and consequently was intolerant. This was not in any respect to be the case with the religion which Jesus intended to spread, for as soon as Christianity is connected with external constraints, it altogether loses its peculiar character, and ceases to be a worship of God in spirit and in truth. Jesus intended therefore to keep it entirely distinct from political affairs. For this purpose he gave it such regulations as were compatible with any form of government, and made it the duty of his followers to attend to their civil relations in every respect. As the principal object, however, contemplated in his plan, was to bring about and perfect the regeneration of the human family, so he was obliged to teach principles, awaken dispositions and feelings, and impart a spirit, the extension of which would by a gentle, regular and silent progress, destroy the old, inconvenient, and oppressive forms then in vogue, and substitute new and far better ones in their stead. Now the religion

which Jesus made known to the world, and the morality connected with it, were of such a character as necessarily to produce this effect as far as extended in their purity, comprehended and embraced. They were exactly calculated for delivering oppressed humanity from its slavish fetters, healing the wounds which it had received from continual wars, and giving it that freedom and peace for which it had long sighed and toiled in vain.

§ 35. That it was necessary for the old huge fabric of Jewish and heathen superstition gradually to give away, and in the end entirely to fall, before the introduction of the better religious knowledge which it was Christ's object to impart, needs no proof. All the states of the old world, however, rested to a greater or less degree upon the pillars of this superstition, and if these, their chief support and indispensable foundations, were taken away, it was necessary that they also should be dissolved, and gradually fall to ruins. The political regulations of the old world, as well as a great part of the laws by which justice was administered, had their origin in a spirit of selfishness and oppression. Should that love prevail, which constituted the soul of Christ's morality, it would produce an entire change in this respect. It would of course make the people acquainted with the true character of the old constitutions, and lead them gradually to see that they were hard and oppressive; dishonorable to human nature, and incompatible with its dignity and destiny. The increasing influence of this love would soften mankind, and transform this world from a theatre of tyranny, bloodshed, and lamentation, into a habitation of freedom, peace, and joy. We have only to trace the effects which such a love as that which Jesus required his followers to possess was calculated to produce in all parts of society, in order to be convinced that by its means he intended to improve the external condition of our race, and make them partakers of true and lasting prosperity.

§ 36. Jesus began his reformation of human society and its condition, where it must ever be begun in order to be thorough and salutary, with the members of domestic so-

ciety. The real love which was to be the means of effecting this reformation, makes out of man all that can be made. It quickens his powers, ennobles his dispositions and feelings, moderates his inclinations, extirpates every selfish passion, and suffers him to act only as a dutiful, rational, useful, and conscientious being. It fills him with a warm spirit of activity in favor of every thing true, just, and salutary, which is neither terrified at difficulties, nor wearied with hardships. By such dispositions, feelings, and moral habits, Jesus intended above all things to secure the welfare of families. Matrimony was no longer to be a state for the male to exercise unjust dominion over the female, and keep her in miserable servitude. It was to be transformed into a bond of kindness, into the noblest and tenderest friendship, into a source of a great variety of joys of the purest kind.* Polygamy and polyandry, whoredom and adultery, as well as the divorces made among married people for frivolous and unjustifiable reasons, and all those abuses and excesses, which had disturbed the peace of society, filled it with disorder, and rendered its real happiness impossible, were henceforth to be entirely done away, Matt. 5: 31, 32. 19: 4—9. Mark 10: 2—12. Luke 16: 18, for every house was to become a temple, and every inhabitant to be ennobled, improved, and consecrated to the service of God and morality. Here, heads of families were to find constant exercise for their virtue. Here children were not only to receive their existence, but the most salutary attention, and be educated in the best manner. Here the hard servitude in which domestics and servants had thus far sighed was to be gradually modified, and ultimately banished.† Here by the united effects of diligence and regular love, a foundation was to be laid, and preparation made for the welfare of new families.

* [Compare the author's *System der christl. Moral*, III. 290, or 321, 4te A.]

† [Compare the author's *System der christl. Moral*, III. S. 449, or 500 4te A. Much valuable instruction in regard to this subject may be derived from Gregoire, *De la domesticité chez les peuples anciens et modernes*, Paris, 1814.]

And finally, here was to be found the securest retreat from all the evils of life, and the best alleviation of its pressing cares. Animated by the spirit of Christian love to God and man, every family becomes such a venerable whole; and it was Christ's object first of all in this way to improve domestic society, and render it happy.

§ 37. This love, however, was to exert full as salutary an influence upon civil society and whole nations and states. "Could we," said Plato, "create so close, tender, and cordial a connexion between the citizens of a state, as to induce all to consider themselves as relatives,—as fathers, brothers, and sisters, then this whole state would constitute but a single family, be subjected to the most perfect regulations, and become the happiest republic that ever existed upon earth." This thought, in itself considered truly excellent, led the philosopher to the idea which has often been ridiculed by those who perhaps knew not its origin in his mind, of giving the most distinguished citizens of his fabulous state a community of wives, and thereby actually transforming all the descendants into blood relatives.* What Plato sought to accomplish by the feeble power of consanguinity, means badly conceived,† Jesus intended to accomplish by the power of a religious and fraternal love. Indeed, it is impossible in any other way to give a nation harmony and connexion, and animate it with the spirit of one entire family. Such a love unites the citizens of a state together in such a manner, that they become, as it were, members of the same body, and yield each other constant assistance, by operating together, and mutually participating in each other's cares, 1 Cor. 12: 12—27. Rom. 12: 4—8. Eph. 4: 15, 16.‡ This of

* De Republica, l. V. p. 21 seqq., Bip. ed. [Tom. VII.]

† Even Aristotle brought forward some well grounded objections to it, De Republ., l. II. c. 2—4.

‡ This was the very idea that Plato had of a state, under perfect regulations. Hence, in the passage quoted, he uses the same illustration, of which Christ's apostles avail themselves, when they wish to describe the sympathizing love, which, according to the Gospel, is felt by every regenerated man for the general welfare. Comp. Rom. 12: 4—8, with the illustrations which Plato has given of his views in this respect, De Republ. l. V. p. 29 and 30.

course produces a public spirit, a patriotic love, and creates a dependance of each member upon the whole, far nobler in its principles, more efficacious in every situation of life, and far less dubious in its results, than the patriotism so celebrated among the selfish nations of ancient and modern times.* Wherever Christian love to God and man prevails, it produces a tender conscientiousness, ever in operation, which leads one not only to avoid all those vices destructive to the order and peace of good society, but to stand in his place, and do whatever duty and justice require without reference to any other obligation, and without any respect to rewards and punishments. In all transactions and every kind of business, it creates a zeal, honesty, diligence, confidence, and faithfulness, which cannot be effected to the same degree by any other means. Hence this love must be of great advantage in legislation. Those magistrates and members of civil society, who are animated by the spirit of genuine Christian philanthropy, know the infinite value of human nature, and the sacred rights that belong to it. They will, therefore, neither make nor tolerate those absurd, useless, cruel, and oppressive laws which are opposed to its dignity and destiny. On the other hand, they will endeavor to dispose of all the relations and claims of the different classes of society in a manner the most consistent with the rights and the happiness of each individual. Finally, this love, by cherishing the peaceful, domestic virtues, diffuses life, warmth, health, and strength, throughout the state where it prevails, from which must result a youthful bloom and lasting prosperity. Here it should be particularly observed, that the salutary effects of a Christian love to God and man do not necessarily presuppose this or that form of government. No, they can be produced in every state, though in some easier than in others. The means of which Jesus intended to avail himself for bringing the civil regulations

* [Vid. the author's *System der christl. Moral*, III. S. 496, or 549, 4te A., and his *Sermons* v. 1804, I. nr. 4. am Sonnt. Reminisce-re, concerning the remarkable union which the Gospel creates between love to one's country and philanthropy in general.]

of the human family to a greater degree of moral perfection, and making them subservient to real happiness, is of such unlimited application, as to be compatible with every form of government that has ever existed ; for it ennobles them all, fills them with the greatest possible energy, and procures the most powerful influence for every thing that they contain which is good and excellent.

§ 38. Far more important, however, was the change which he intended to effect in the human family in general. Hitherto the nations of the earth had had gods of their own, which they worshipped with distinct rites and ceremonies. This difference of religion had separated one from another, and too often occasioned grudges, mutual hostilities, and contempt ; at least, in various ways, it had proved the means of impeding that intercourse, which ought to exist between nations. Things were not always to remain thus. An entire and eternal change was to be effected in this respect. The attention of mankind at large was now to be directed to one God, as their common Creator and Lord ; as a Being, who treats all with the same impartial and paternal tenderness, and does not require his subjects to worship him with external splendor, nor by arbitrary rites and ceremonies, but in spirit and in truth, and of course substantially in the same way. Hitherto, mankind had been wholly destitute of that genuine humanity, that real public spirit, that hearty benevolence which comprehends all in its grasp. Hence the barbarity of most nations and the hostile jealousies and constant rage of war prevalent among them, as well as the universal esteem in which valor and heroism were held, and the honor which was bestowed upon those who had destroyed cities, laid waste countries, and reduced large portions of the world to subjection. In this respect also an entire and eternal change was to be effected. The spirit of love with which Jesus intended to inspire mankind, was to extirpate every trace of barbarity, and humanize and tame the wildest nations of the earth. How muchsoever single classes and tribes of men might differ from each other in nature, form, languages, manners, customs, and governments,

they were now to be brought to feel their near relationship to each other, treat each other as brethren, consider themselves as the creatures and the children of one universal Father, and mainly to have the same interests of virtue, truth, morality, and happiness, in view. The sword of war was to cease its rage. The earth, which had hitherto been the theatre of oppression, and drunk the blood of her inhabitants in streams, was to be transformed into a place of order and repose, and no longer be covered with human gore. The gentle reign of reason and love was henceforth to take the place of the iron dominion which had hitherto been maintained over mankind by the power and right of the strongest, and all contests between nations to be decided by them with the voice of uprightness. That shy reserve and jealous mistrust with which nations and states had been accustomed to contemplate each other, was also to be done away, and open honesty, inviolable fidelity and firm integrity to animate all transactions, and constitute the security of every alliance. Hitherto the free exercise of reason, the happy extension of the arts and sciences, and the wise use of the good and excellent things with which mankind are presented in the kingdom of nature, had met with many and various obstacles. Superstition had rendered the human mind indolent and timid. The mad and intolerant priesthood had thrown reason into fetters and oppressed it as far as lay in their power. The division of the human family into distinct classes of men having but little connexion with each other, had prevented those inventions of universal utility, which were the property of individual nations, from becoming as general as they deserved to be. In this respect also, every thing was to be changed: Human nature was now to obtain the full and unabridged possession of those rights of which it had so long been deprived by superstition and intolerance. Under the powerful protection of an all-exciting love it was to obtain ample room for action. It was no longer to be altogether prevented from engaging in numerous investigations, or else obliged to veil its discoveries in enigmatical obscurities. Even religion, to which it was

indebted for its freedom, was to be subjected to its correcting decisions. Reason was to try every thing and retain the best. This love to God and man was to become the main spring of every effort of the human mind, and, by arousing its faculties and putting them in action, to prove the means of extending its investigations to every thing that exists;—was to purify and refine the whole mass of its knowledge, to enlarge the sciences already known, and lead to new discoveries;—was to improve and multiply the beneficial arts of life, and to exalt the enjoyment of them by always enabling reason to make a profitable use of the productions, and the good things of nature. In this way a general connexion was to be established between nations, and their fraternal familiarity, and noble and benevolent dispositions and feelings towards each other, were to become the means of rendering all valuable knowledge, every beneficial discovery and every art calculated to embellish life, of the most extensive utility to mankind, and leading one part of the earth to feel an active interest in the welfare and the happiness of another. By means, therefore, of one of the gentlest, holiest, and firmest bonds, which the human heart is capable of appreciating, the human race were to be united into one family devoted to the service of God, and led on to the attainment of every possible degree of perfection. In their earthly habitation they were to recognise an exterior court leading to a higher sanctuary, and while its occupants were daily to become better prepared for a transition from one to the other. I need not stop to call the attention of him who has any perception of the great and exalted, to the divinity of this plan. Such an one will be unable to contemplate it without deep admiration and a kind of delightful awe; and he who has no perception of what is truly great, would not understand me, should I attempt to give him an explanation of its exalted character.

III. THE MANNER IN WHICH CHRIST'S PLAN WAS TO BE CARRIED INTO EFFECT.

§ 39. He, however, who examines the plan which the founder of Christianity had before him, will fail to arrive at a full view of it, without attending to the manner in which it was to be carried into effect. From reflecting upon the subject in general, it appears, that Jesus might have made choice of any one of three different ways for this purpose. He might have employed power and engaged in warlike enterprises for removing the obstacles that stood in the way of his improvements : he might have put the hidden springs of a secret society in motion, and, by imperceptible compulsion, have endeavored to reduce mankind to the order which I have already described : or, finally, he might have made use of the gentlest means possible, and have allured the human mind to reflect upon its relations, and conduct in a manner worthy of its high destination by means of convincing instruction and the introduction of appropriate regulations. Jesus rejected the two first of these means and chose the last. This can be incontestibly shown from his history.

JESUS DID NOT THINK OF EMPLOYING POWER.

§ 40. Jesus did not intend to make use of power, or engage in warlike enterprises for removing the obstacles that stood in the way of his improvements. He has expressed himself on this point with sufficient clearness. The very first time that he made his appearance in public at Jerusalem, when he seemed inclined to make use of power in opposing certain abuses then prevalent in the temple, he assured those who spoke with him upon the subject, that he had no idea of doing so ; that, on the other hand, he was ready to submit to the ill treatment of his countrymen, by whom he expected to be put to death, John 2: 19: 22.* In a private conversation which he held

* [The author in this place, as well as in his treatise, *De Christo, suam dum viveret resurrectionem prædicente*, Opusc. Academ, II.

with Nicodemus, on the same occasion, he told him explicitly, that he came, not to judge the world but to save it; that it was not his intention to fulfil the vain and cruel expectations which his countrymen had of the Messiah, by subduing the heathen in bloody wars, but to offer himself a sacrifice for all mankind, John 3: 14—17. The first thing that he did, after having chosen the twelve men, who, under the name of apostles, were to be his confidential pupils and friends, was, to lay down rules for the regulation of their future conduct in executing his commissions, Matt. 10: 35 seqq. In so doing, he prohibited them from making use of power not only, but any of those means in themselves innocent, of which men had formerly availed themselves in order to acquire influence and authority. On the other hand, he told them frankly that he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; that nothing but perils and persecutions were before them; and at the same time, charged them never to think of opposing any thing to the attacks of their enemies but wisdom and patience. He told them that it would be unreasonable for them to expect better treatment than he had received, and that all who would adhere to him, must resolve to relinquish the greatest advantages, and offer up their very lives in sacrifice to the cause of truth. Jesus is known very often to have given similar instructions to his friends, for the purpose of familiarizing them with the representation that

32—34, follows that explanation of Christ's words, founded upon the authority of the apostle John, which is far more agreeable to the context than that which is now generally adopted after the example of Henke. Jesus was reproached with having an intention apparently to begin a great reformation, and was asked for his authority to do so. Had he replied: "I intend to give you a new religious constitution," it would have been *arguing in a circle*, and the same as if he had said: "that I am to reform you, I prove by the fact that I reform you. In that case too, he would have said *ἐγὼ ἀλλοῖον*, rather than *ἐγὼ αὐτοῦ*, as *this temple* would not have been the one that he intended to restore. But why might not Jesus disclose the hatred of his enemies then at work to betray him, and show them how he saw through their hearts, and that he knew well where their plans would end, but that he should after all get the victory? The threatening imperative is used exactly as in Matt. 23: 32. Rev. 22: 11, and was calculated to terrify the confident, and upbraid them with what their wicked spirits were incessantly endeavoring to effect.]

their business was not to fight and conquer, but to teach and suffer. In the last and confidential discourses which he held with his disciples shortly before his death, John XII—XVI, in which he spoke very circumstantially of the means which they were to use in the execution of his great work after his decease, not a trace is to be found of any command enjoining it upon them to think of coercive measures. So far is this from being the case, that he tells them again with increased frankness, that they must become sacrificial victims for the good of the world, and suffer in defenceless submission, John 16: 1—4. From the fact then, that, at the very commencement of his public career, Jesus declared that he was soon to die, John 2: 19. 3: 14, and often repeated the prediction, at the same time expressly assuring his hearers that he had no intention of venturing upon any enterprise for the acquisition of power, but that his object was to offer his life for the good of the world, Matt. 20: 24—28, it is in general sufficiently evident, that he was very far from entertaining any idea of carrying his plan into execution by violent means. Nor was the death to which he so often alluded as in prospect, such as the hero meets with on the field of battle, for he describes it in the clearest manner as an execution to be inflicted upon him by the magistrates, Mark 10: 33, 34, Luke 18: 31—34. Certainly he would not have voluntarily submitted to such ill treatment, had he thought of using power.

There are only two passages to be found in the accounts given of the life of Jesus, which seem to imply the contrary, and these have often been wrested in proof of the accusation that Jesus intended to accomplish his designs by force. "Think not," said he to his apostles, "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household," Matt. 10: 34—36. This passage, considered by itself as many, with great partiality and injustice, have considered it, does

certainly appear to speak in very strong terms of warlike projects, which were to put every thing in commotion.*

When, however, we observe that this is a part of the very same discourse in which Jesus makes it the duty of his friends, in their future efforts for the accomplishment of his purposes, to exercise the most discreet moderation, and the most patient submission, while he informs them of the oppressions they must suffer, and that too, without employing power in their own defence ; when we farther observe that immediately afterwards he requires them to become martyrs in the cause of truth, every doubt must vanish, that, in the passage quoted, Jesus speaks solely of the violent movements which should result from the blind religious zeal of the Jews and heathen, and their opposition to the promulgation of his doctrines. In accordance with the vain expectations of the Jewish nation respecting Jesus, the apostles had anticipated a life full of ease, joy, and peace. In this place, however, as often in other places, he frankly tells them that he had never intended to gratify their desires in this respect ; that, on the other hand, the usual consequences of making known the truth to minds under the influence of prejudice and vice, should ensue, and that they should meet with trouble, opposition, and persecution. Thus his friends understood him ; for none were more earnest in recommending a willing submission to magistrates, and a compliance with every civil regulation, than they. Hence, for the three first centuries of the Christian era, not an instance can be found in which Christians, though they were numerous and might easily have done so, ever opposed power with power, or took up arms against the inhuman tyrants by whom they were often most cruelly persecuted.†

With far less appearance of truth, can an appeal be made to those words which Jesus spoke to his apostles a

* For example, the author of the *Catechisme de L'honnête-Homme*, p. 34.

† Consult Tertullian, *Apologet.* c. 37, Havercamp's Ed. [*Comp. Neander's K. G., I. 2. S. 434 ff.*]

few hours before he was taken prisoner; "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," Luke 22: 36. Jesus does not here speak of the manner in which his great plan was to be carried into execution, but of the changes about to take place. From the whole context of the discourse it is perfectly evident, that he intended solely to remind his apostles to think of their own security, and guard them against the expectation, that he should deliver them in a wonderful manner from the danger before them, when he was about to give himself up entirely to the rage of his enemies. As soon as he perceived that his figurative expression had not been properly understood, he explained it, and being asked by the apostles whether the two swords then in their possession were enough, replied that they were amply sufficient; an answer which would have had no meaning, had he intended to prepare for an energetic resistance, and oppose power with power.*

§ 41. It will be still more evident that Jesus intended to avoid making use of any kind of power in the accomplishment of his great purposes, if we glance at the whole course of his conduct while engaged in the public ministry. Upon the strictest examination of it, we find that Jesus not only made no preparations for violent enterprises, but that he sought carefully to avoid all those who were able to put him in a condition for obtaining influence and power. Scarcely had he left the obscurity of private life, before opportunities were presented him for coming in contact with men of more or less influence and authority. The very first time that he made his appearance as a public teacher at Jerusalem and began to attract the attention of his countrymen, he was visited by a distinguished member of the Sanhedrim, John 3: 1 seqq., who expressed opinions respecting him from which he might have inferred

* For other attempts to explain this somewhat obscure passage, [abused also by the Fragmentist, S. 153,] and show that the language cannot be understood of violent measures, consult the notes of Michaelis, appended to his translation of the New Testament in German, Th. I. S. 486, and Flatt's *Magazin für christliche Dogmatik und Moral*, St. III. 224 ff.

that it would be very easy for him to raise up a party in his favor among the most respectable men of his nation, John 3: 2. Such a prospect would have been very agreeable to him, had the acquisition of power been his object. Jesus, however, was so indifferent to it, that his conversation with Nicodemus was calculated to irritate and alienate this man's feelings, rather than gain his love and affection. Soon afterwards, Jesus was presented with an opportunity for forming a connexion with one of Herod the Tetrarch's noblemen, by which means, a way was opened for his acquiring influence at this ruler's court. Of this opportunity he made no use. On the other hand, he refused to return to Capernaum in company with this man, or to receive the least favor at his hands, John 4: 46—54. And in short, not an expression ever escaped him, which indicated that he had ever thought of cultivating an acquaintance with the distinguished and powerful and drawing them into his interests.—Let no one think, however, that he avoided intercourse with the great men of his nation in order to effect violent changes by availing himself of the assistance of the lower classes. It is true that he was often followed by great multitudes at once, and that on many occasions, he might, with but little trouble, have collected together quite an army. Instead of exciting their zeal, however, in his behalf, he did every thing in his power to assuage it, and prevent disorders of every kind. In his meetings with the people, he spoke of nothing but the truths of religion. The affairs of the state were never mentioned. Indeed, he refused to meddle with any thing that appeared to have the least connexion with them, Luke 12: 13, 14. He never hinted at his being the offspring of David, and having sprung from royal blood; a fact, which would have contributed greatly to procure for him the favor of the common people. On the other hand, he apparently wished to avert their attention from the subject. Hence, from the very commencement of his public ministry, he kept at a certain distance from his Mother, thus implying that he founded no claims upon his origin, Matt. 12: 46 seqq. Mark 3: 31 seqq. Luke 8: 19. Not unfrequently did he prohibit

those present from making known his benevolent actions, when there was danger of its exciting disturbances among the multitude. He never flattered the people, but often told them the bitterest truths, with the most unshrinking boldness, John 6: 26 seqq. In order to diminish the number of those that crowded around him, he frequently avoided thickly settled villages, and retired into barren deserts, where it was impossible for large multitudes to subsist. To prevent the accumulation of the people to such a degree that they should conceive themselves strong enough to undertake something in his behalf, he contrived to distribute the multitude of those who wished to see and hear him, into very small and harmless numbers, by constantly travelling from place to place; and when one of the larger crowds was intent upon making him king, and fighting for him, he withdrew from it until it was quieted and dispersed. In addition to all this, he was poor, which, undoubtedly for the purpose of depriving those who adhered to him of all hopes of earthly gain, he never sought to conceal, Matt. 8. 20. 17: 24; he paid no attention to the acquisition of property, but appears to have relinquished what he may have possessed and might enjoyed,* and thus gave up the means the most necessary for those who engage in great and violent under-

*2 Cor. 8:9. History discloses nothing of Christ's having been rich and then taken upon himself a voluntary poverty; but it does not thence follow that this passage is to be understood in a figurative sense. It is well known that the credible accounts of the domestic affairs of Jesus, are very imperfect; and more than one way can be thought of, in which he may have acquired property, notwithstanding the poverty of his parents. Comp. *Beyträge zur Beförderung des vernünftigen Denkens in der Religion*, Heft IV. S. 160 ff. [This explanation of Corridi, built as it is, upon a mere hypothesis, in some respects, a singular one, has too much to oppose it, to admit of its being preferred to the common one. Mary was evidently poor, for she brought a poor person's offering on the presentation of Jesus, Luke 2. 24, and she was also poor at Christ's death, John 19: 26, 27. Had Jesus acquired wealth while he belonged to her family, she would certainly have been the owner of it, and it would have been out of *his* power to give this family property away. But, which is a far more important consideration, could it be said that we are indebted for all our spiritual wealth, that is, the whole work of redemption, to the pretended, voluntary poverty of Jesus?]

takings; and finally, he chose poor men out of the lowest ranks of society for the future execution of his plan, and went so far as to prohibit them from habiting themselves in a manner indicative of external power, Luke 22: 25, 26. With all these facts before us, every suspicion must vanish, that Jesus intended to employ violent measures in carrying his plan into effect. It is impossible for that man to have determined upon employing power, who not only neglects, but despises all the means of exercising power.

§ 42. The only thing remaining which seems to indicate that Jesus intended to execute his plan by force, is his final entrance into Jerusalem. This, at first glance, certainly appears to have something doubtful upon the face of it, and looks like an unsuccessful attempt to obtain possession of the capital, the temple, and the chief authority, by surprise in the midst of a tumult. I am well aware of the odious light in which this affair has been represented, and the injurious suspicions which have been drawn from it.* That man however must be very unfair, and have altogether lost sight of the connexion of this event with what precedes, to discover in it any traces of violent designs. As in this case it is important to exhibit convincing proof, that Jesus in the execution of his plan contemplated nothing of the kind, it will be necessary for me to subjoin a few remarks respecting this memorable part of his history.

It cannot be denied that Jesus entered upon his last journey to Jerusalem, with the conviction that he was to be executed there. He foretold his friends of the event before he left Galilee, Matt. 20: 17—19. Mark 10: 32—34. Luke 18: 31—34. John 11: 7—16, and seized every occasion to remind them of it, while on his way thither. Now it is evident at first glance, that these declarations are altogether opposed to the idea of his having intended to take possession of Jerusalem in a sedition. It is also worthy of remark, that from these same declarations we may justly infer it was not the intention of Jesus to with-

* [Especially by the Fragmentist, V. Zweck Jesu, S. 145—154.]

draw himself as he had hitherto done, should he do any thing to furnish his enemies among the great men at Jerusalem with a pretext to complain of him and inflict upon him the punishment of death. His object at this time, as we may gather from all the circumstances, was, to die at Jerusalem, as he wished to suffer a death which should take place in the presence of his fellow citizens, and excite great attention. It was impossible for him therefore to avoid surrendering himself into the hands of his bitterest enemies; and of course impossible for him to avoid acting entirely different from what he had hitherto usually done. An occasion soon presented, in which Jesus, without doing any thing that can be imputed to him as sin, was enabled to produce a movement which furnished his enemies at Jerusalem with exactly such an opportunity as they had long desired, for removing him out of the way, and determined them to hasten the accomplishment of their purpose.

On account of the nearness of the feast of the passover, Jerusalem was filled with strangers by the time that Jesus arrived at Bethany, which is known to be about half an hour's distance from the city. Here he stopped and raised his friend Lazarus, who had died several days previous to his arrival. The report of this affair soon reached Jerusalem, and drew out great multitudes to see Jesus and the man whom he had raised from the dead. Although, in order to escape from the crowd, Jesus withdrew from Bethany immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus, and concealed himself in an obscure village of Ephraim,* John 11: 54, yet, as the passover was near at hand, he was obliged in a few days to return again to Bethany, in order to prepare for his entrance into Jerusalem, John 12: 1. Scarcely had it been reported in the city that Jesus had re-entered Bethany, when increasing multitudes under the influence of curiosity and admiration, again went out to see him, John 12: 9. As these multitudes greatly honored Jesus, and in him hoped to find the long expected

* Reland, *Palestina*, Tom. I. 376 seqq. and Tom. II. p. 765. Also Bachiene, *Beschreibung von Palästina*, Th. II. B. III. § 579.

divine deliverer of their nation, it was natural for them to offer their services to accompany him, as soon as they learned that he was preparing to enter Jerusalem, and hit upon the thought of conducting him thither with as much animation and as great exhibitions of festivity as possible. Accordingly, a noisy procession was formed, which surrounded him with joyful acclamations, and increased in its progress towards the city. It is not to be wondered at, that those who had long cherished the idea, that Jesus was to be the deliverer of his country, the Messiah for whom they had so often anxiously wished, should, in the tumult of their joy, and under the influence of this excited state of feeling, begin to express this hope in words, and actually salute him as king of Israel. Having entered the temple at Jerusalem, all that he did, was, to clear it of avaricious merchants and money changers, as he had done before, and in his usual manner impart instruction to the people.

This account, taken out of the Gospels, is sufficient of itself to prove that there is no well founded reason for blaming Jesus in taking this step, and considering it as the result of a rash experiment. The following circumstances, however, exhibit this in a still clearer light, and make it perfectly evident, that the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem was in no respects intended as an artificial contrivance for the accomplishment of a more important object. Not the least arrangement was made for this entrance. Nobody had been armed, and no expectations had been excited, that an important change was in progress. Jesus had instructed the multitudes whom curiosity had drawn together around him, with the same gentleness that he had formerly been accustomed to do, and, instead of exciting in them a spirit of wild disorder and war, imperceptibly prepared them for rejoicing. While on his way to the city, in order to avoid every appearance of violence, he assumed the quiet and peaceful habits of a pilgrim in company with his friends going up to the feast, and thus, as one of the Evangelists expresses it, using the words of an old prophet, "came meek and lowly to Jerusalem." That

this solemnity was really of such a character and had nothing suspicious about it, is evident in particular from the fact, that it did not attract the attention of the Romans. It is well known that on these occasions they doubled their vigilance and exercised unusual circumspection in regard to every movement, on account of the innumerable multitudes of people then collected together in the city. Indeed, history furnishes us with proof, that no person would have been less likely to delay the forcible suppression of any thing resembling sedition than Pilate, who was Roman procurator at that time.* This notwithstanding, the Roman guards remained quiet in their places, when Jesus entered the temple, and Pilate had no knowledge of Jesus until he saw him brought before the judgement seat, and accused there by the Jewish priests. So decisive is this circumstance, that it is impossible for any one who reflects upon it and is acquainted with the state of those times, any longer to think of construing Christ's entrance into Jerusalem into any thing like the appearance of an insurrection and an attempt at violent measures. The indifference of the Romans in this case, is at least not a matter of astonishment.† It was not uncommon for strangers who came up to Jerusalem at the feast, to travel in great companies, and thus enter the city.‡ It is not very improbable that animated songs were frequently made use of on such occasions.§ The Romans, therefore, doubtless looked upon

* For examples, vid. Luke 13: 1, and Joseph. Antiq., l. XVIII. c. 3. § 2.

† [It may also be observed that the Romans had been accustomed to similar entrances in other cases. Vid. Cicero pro Muraena, c. 33.]

‡ Besides, this mode of travelling has been universally common in those regions. Luke, 2: 44, unquestionably speaks in express terms of such a caravan of the Galileans returning from the feast. From the accounts given us by the Evangelists of the life of Jesus, it may also be frequently observed, that the multitudes which sought Jesus for the purpose of hearing him, were always the most numerous about the time of the feast, evidently because many had collected together on their way up to Jerusalem, and were returning in large companies.

§ Many interpreters are inclined to believe that the collection of the *Psalms of degrees* so called, were designed for such travelling songs. Comp. Herder, Vom Geist der hebräischen Poesie, Th. II.

the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, as nothing more than that of a company of strangers, it being no uncommon thing to see such companies coming up to the feast of the passover about this time, and consequently felt no need of making any movement. To all this it may be added, that in the evening, Jesus voluntarily left the temple,* which he had in his possession, and in which no one dared to oppose him, and returned without any public attendants to Bethany ; that instead of concealing himself and waiting for a suitable occasion, (as one must have done, who had engaged in any violent enterprise and failed,) he returned again to the temple the very next day in like manner without any public attendants, and continued to teach there openly among the people ; that when the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrim entered into conversation with him respecting the occurrences of the previous day, he told them that they had nothing to fear from him, but that, on the other hand, he was about to give himself up to their control, to be expelled and slain, in which respect, he compared their conduct to that of some unprincipled vine dressers, who rose up against the son of the lawful owner of the vineyard ; and finally, that from this time onward, his conversation among his most intimate friends, was entirely made up of farewell speeches, touching exhortations to steadfastness during the scenes before them, and affectionate consolations, with which he connected various regulations having a reference to his death. Is it possible for any one who reflects impartially upon all this, longer to entertain a single suspicion respecting an event which was the natural result of the circumstances in which Jesus then found himself, or in it to discover the least indication that Jesus possessed a blood-thirsty spirit, and intended to make use of violent means for the accomplishment of his purposes?

But why am I so prolix ? A spirit capable of such en-

S. 367. [Jahn, Introduction to the Old Testament, translated by W. and Turner, § 178. Tr.]

* The importance of this circumstance has been shown by Michaelis in his notes to the New Testament, Th. 1. S. 212, 213.

largement of thought, such benevolent views and feelings, as to form a plan for the good of all men, such as that, the compass and character of which I have already described, was surely incapable of descending so low as to act the part of a miserable rebel, and form the puny, cunning plan which many would fain attribute to him in the affair which I have just considered. A spirit of such greatness could not possibly have failed to perceive, that such a violent mode of proceeding in the execution of a plan for the happiness and improvement of mankind, would defeat the very object for which it was intended. Jesus therefore could never have thought of removing the obstacles that lay in the way of his undertakings, by force or warlike measures.

JESUS DID NOT THINK OF EMPLOYING A SECRET SOCIETY.

§ 43. Perhaps, however, Jesus intended to put the hidden springs of a secret society in motion, and by a gentle, imperceptible compulsion, to reduce mankind to the order which I have already described. In the history of human opinions, it may be observed, that every age is more or less inclined to justify its own taste, undertakings, and decisions, by considering the greatest men of preceding ages as the authors of those views, institutions, and modes of thinking, which it greatly favors, and particularly esteems. It is certainly very flattering to discover ourselves in the same way with men who have been the admiration of centuries, and be able to pretend that we only follow them, and set forth what has been received from them. This age has long been entangled in the most curious tissue of secret societies and brotherhoods.* In it,

* [Thus might Reinhard express himself in 1798, when that tissue had been broken up and brought into the greatest disgrace; whereas in the preceding edition, published in 1789, he was obliged to say, "an age which contains a most curious tissue of ——— societies." The persons to whom he particularly refers, are, Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the order of the Illuminati, as a higher degree of Masonry, who defended his principles in his *Apologie der Illuminaten*, Nürnberg, 1786; im Pythagoras, od. Betracht. ueber die geheime

the idea has long prevailed, and obtained many acute defenders and friends, that, for a man to accomplish his benevolent views by the invisible power of secret institutions, is not only lawful, but great and exalted, and a sure sign of a comprehensive and intelligent mind. It is no wonder therefore, that this age has hit upon the opinion, that the author of Christianity intended also to avail himself of such means; for it is not difficult to stick close to a great man of antiquity, and yet interpret his undertakings in such a manner as to make them tally in some measure with modern institutions, especially when one expects to derive advantage from the comparison, and is willing to indulge in bold explanations, making conjectures, and adding supplements, as well as assume that confident and decisive tone with which many writers of the present day, are accustomed to speak of ancient history. In such a way, and by the use of such arts, it would not be difficult to find the traces of a secret fraternity even in the writings of Christ's friends;—a fraternity by means of which, he intended to carry his plan into execution, and the real, internal character of which, it would be impossible ever to ascertain. Hence, as is well known, some have begun to explain numerous passages of Scripture in favor of the hypothesis of a secret order, to discover fragments of its symbolical language in the expressions of the apostles, to distinguish its various degrees, and to impute to Jesus secrets entirely foreign from the object which he had in view.* It is

Welt- und Regierungs-Kunst, 1790, and in other writings. Comp. Schlözer, Staats-Anzeigen, XII. 263—279; Berliner Monatsschrift, 1785, Octob., Novemb., and Decemb.; and Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, Tom. IV. and V., ed. Hamb., 1803, or the whole of the 4th volume in the German translation;—and Bahrdt, as the founder of the Union of the 22, which was disclosed by Bode in the work; *Mehr Noten als Text, oder die Deutsche Union der 22er, eines neuen geheimen Ordens zum Besten der Menschheit*, L. 1789; not to say any thing of those who were accused of being secretly connected with the Jesuits, and of Crypto-Catholicism.]

* [It is well known that Bahrdt has done this likewise, both in the work quoted above, p. 6, and in the notes added to his third translation of the New Testament. Respecting the latest attempt that has been made to deduce the establishment of Christianity from a secret order, vid. Appendix C.]

against my will to enter upon the examination of these bold conjectures, which, notwithstanding their great improbability, such an age as ours is very ready to believe, as I foresee, that, in spite of my anxious efforts to be short, it will involve me in a disagreeable prolixity. It is manifest, however, that if the supposition of which I am speaking were true, it would have been essentially connected with Christ's plan. For this reason, I shall give it a faithful examination.

§ 44. This examination is attended with peculiar difficulties. Hitherto we have been able to maintain all that we considered as belonging to the plan of Jesus, with the greatest certainty, as every thing is laid down in the accounts which his friends have given of him, in a manner too plain to be misapprehended. Here, on the other hand, we have a subject to handle, which, from its very nature, is involved in ambiguous obscurity, and, in reference to which, it seems impossible to bring every thing to light. For instance, we cannot justly require those to establish their assertions by perfectly clear and irrefragable proof, who allege, that Jesus intended to accomplish his purposes chiefly by means of a society of excellent men, who had formed themselves into a secret order, into the sublime mysteries of which, but a few of the great mass of his ordinary followers, were ever admitted. If such a society ever existed, the very fact that it was secret and kept all its affairs so, would render it impossible for us to expect to find any thing more about it in the history of Christ's enterprises and life, than passing hints, dark allusions, and ambiguous remarks. Had the writers of the New Testament all belonged to such a fraternity, and been acquainted with its most private concerns, obliged as they would have been to keep the whole affair a secret, they must have avoided expressing themselves intelligibly respecting it, in what they wrote for public and for general use. Every thing that we could look for, in such a case, would be single allusions, incidental and ambiguous assertions, here and there a word quite unintelligible to all but the initiated, and dark ceremonies, seemingly pointing to something higher, veiled in secrecy. He, therefore, who enters into a

close investigation of this subject, enters a region of total uncertainty; where the opponent enjoys the important advantage of appealing to every trifle in any measure favorable to his purpose, and pointing out to the inquirer in those circumstances with which he thought himself perfectly acquainted, certain things which give them a mystical character, while the latter often finds himself unable to meet the former with that clear and convincing reasoning which is desirable, in such an important matter. It is very difficult, every body knows, to form a correct opinion of the secret societies now in existence. Their writings contain a multitude of passages, the actual meaning of which, those not connected with these fraternities, are unable to discover. How difficult then would it be to explain the New Testament properly, on the supposition, that it was written by the members of such a society? Would there be any reason for astonishment in such a case, to know, that generations had read it through and through, without discovering any traces of this secrecy?—a secrecy, which perhaps could be discovered only by the practised eye of one, who, from being connected with similar fraternities, had acquired a more penetrating acumen, and a finer sensibility in regard to such things? Those who read my remarks, will understand what I say. I am convinced from my very heart, that Jesus never intended to carry his plan into effect by means of a secret order. If however, upon investigating the subject, I should find myself unable to make this appear as evident to others as it does to me; if my reasoning does not remove every doubt from the mind of the reader, let him remember that, in such a case, it is impossible to arrive at any thing more than a high degree of probability, the strength of which will appear different to different individuals. What I have to say will satisfy the unprejudiced. Those who are destitute of an honest love of the truth, would not be convinced by still stronger reasoning.

§ 45. Every thing may here be reduced to the question: "Is there any thing in the writings of Christ's friends, or the character of the times in which they lived,

as developed by history, which will justify an impartial inquirer in believing, that Jesus was a member or the founder of a secret order, and intended to accomplish the great object which he had in view for the improvement of mankind, by means of its influence?" If we can show, that, instead of there being any thing extant, which can justly be construed into a proof of the existence of such a society, there are circumstances and things, which evidently contradict the supposition that Jesus intended to make use of such means, we shall be constrained to consider the whole allegation respecting such a fraternity, as it is, an empty fiction.

That there is no account extant, which, in express and unambiguous language, proves that Jesus was a member or the founder of a secret order, is universally conceded. To be justified, therefore, in admitting the existence of such a fraternity as a historical truth, we must be able to find sufficient traces of it, either in the external connexions of Jesus, or in his institutions of instruction; in his private life, the language and expressions of his friends, or in their enterprises after his death. In none of these respects, however, does the least thing appear, which goes to satisfy the unprejudiced inquirer.

The external connexions of Jesus are well known. He was never 'out of his native country, except during the first months of his life, in his minority, when his parents fled down into Egypt. We must adhere to pure fiction in direct opposition to all the accounts extant, or admit that this stay of Jesus in Egypt was very short, and that his parents returned again to Palestine before the first years of his childhood had passed away, and consequently, before he was capable of learning any thing in Egypt, if we admit that there was any thing there for him to learn. Now Palestine, the land in which Jesus grew up, was, of all countries, the freest from mysteries; and the Jewish nation to which he belonged, knew less than any other nation about secret associations. A certain writer* has indeed

* Comp. the work [by Carl Leonhard Reinhold,] entitled, *Die hebräischen Mysterien, oder die älteste religiöse Freymaurerey*, Leipz., 1788.

affirmed, that the whole Mosaic religion was an initiation into mysteries, the principal forms and regulations of which were borrowed by Moses from the secrets of the old Egyptians; but it is nothing more than a sally of thought, dressed up in an ingenious manner, and is obviously opposed to the whole character of religious mysteries as they existed among the other nations of antiquity.* An appeal might be made to the Essenes merely with some appearance of truth, in order to show that secret associations were not altogether unknown to the Jews in the time of Christ. This sect was then found in Palestine, and it certainly bore evident marks of being a society which possessed particular secrets. Hence, every one who was admitted into it, was obliged to pledge himself by taking a solemn oath, that he would keep these secrets in the most careful manner;† and so great was the reserve of its members in this respect, that nothing of the kind ever escaped from them; for which reason we are unable to say in what these secrets consisted. The supposition, however, that Jesus was connected with this sect, is not only destitute of all historical foundation, but the life, doctrines, and institutions of Jesus, are so entirely at variance with the opinions and moral habits of these enthusiasts, that, though he has never expressly named them, it is evident that he actually opposed their extravagant principles, and guarded his followers against them.‡ Besides, it is

* The few remarks made by Eichhorn in his notice of this work, *Allgemeine Bibliothek der biblischen Litteratur*, Bd. I. S. 750 ff., furnish a sufficient refutation.

† Comp. Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.*, l. II. c. 8. § 7, Havercamp's ed. [Whiston's, the same. Tr.]

‡ To be convinced of this, one has only to examine what Philo and Josephus have related of this sect very much in detail, and the remarks connected with it, in Prideaux's *Histoire des Juifs*, Tom. IV. p. 78—119; [in the quarto ed., Tom. II. p. 166—180, Amst., 1744; in the German translation, *Connexion des A. und N. Test. mit der Geschichte*, Th. 2. S. 422—451, Dresden, 1721;] [in English, Prideaux's *Connexion*, Vol. III. p. 406, Lond. 1808. Tr.;] and Laderwald's treatise, *Ueber der angeblichen Ursprung des Christenthums aus der jüdischen Secte der Essäer*, in Hencke's *Magazin für Religionsphilosophie, Exegese und Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. IV. St. II. Abh. XVI. [For more upon the subject, vid. Appendix C.]

worthy of remark, that Jesus never visited the region where the main body of these hermits dwelt, which was along the western coast of the Dead Sea.* This small sect excepted, which did not number over 4,000 members, we do not find the least trace of a secret order among the people with whom Jesus lived, or any indications of an inclination for such fraternities. It is certain, therefore, that the external connexions of Jesus did not favor the formation of such an order. Any other nation and country would have presented him with far more inducements and far greater facilities for the purpose.†

§ 46. Moreover, had Jesus intended to operate in this way, we should undoubtedly find something indicative of it in his institutions of instruction; something from which we might infer, with an appearance of probability, that he was either a member or the founder of a secret society. We search here also in vain for circumstances in confirmation of the one or the other. For how can it be *proved* that Jesus was directed or impelled in the performance of his work by a secret society? Would not the whole supposition, that Jesus *found* such a society in existence of which to become a public tool, be altogether destitute of historical foundation? Do the enterprises of Jesus exhibit the least traces of his ever having acted otherwise than according to his own independent will, or ever having been obliged in the first place, to hold consultation with some other person? Did he not in every instance decide all alone and upon the spot? Does not every step that he took bear such marks of resolute determination as to convince any one, that he did not regulate his conduct by others, nor look to others for direction, nor feel responsible to man? Does he ever hint that he

* Vid. Pliny, *His. Nat.*, l. IV. c. 13.

† The Egyptian Therapeutae, of whose mysteries and regulations Philo so frequently speaks, do not belong to this place, as it cannot be proved that they had the least connexion with Jesus, and they did not possess even the constitution of a regular secret society. Eichhorn, *Bibliothek der biblischen Litteratur*, Bd. IV. S. 775 ff. [Comp. Neander's *K. G.*, I. 1. 78—80.]

had been endowed with full powers and sent on his message by any other being than God?

From his institutions of instruction, it is equally hard for us to show that he was even the founder of such an order. It is true that he made various distinctions among his followers. When he taught in public, all men had access to him. He never hesitated to speak before those assemblies which contained his enemies. He had a large number of pupils, however, in close contact with his person, whom he could commission at any time for the performance of his work. Among these were seventy men, whom, when about to make his last journey to Jerusalem, he sent before him, for the purpose of exciting the attention of the people to the important change which he was soon to effect. Still more intimate was he with the company of the twelve apostles, whom he chose at the very commencement of his public ministry, and destined to be the future executors of his purposes, and hence, kept always about his person, and made acquainted with almost every step that he took. Even in this little company, however, there was a distinction. Three of the twelve, Peter, John, and James the elder, were his most intimate disciples and friends, and often permitted to accompany him, where he thought it not advisable to have the rest of his apostles present. Will the historical fact, however, that Jesus made such distinctions among his disciples and friends, authorize us to conclude that he engaged in the formation of a secret society? Is it possible for us to compare these distinctions with the degrees of an order, without sporting with words? In making these distinctions, did Jesus do any thing more than intelligent teachers of every age have been obliged to do, and what circumstances particularly required? What sage has not introduced certain distinctions among his pupils, permitted a select number to have near access to him, and put perfect confidence in a few, and associated them with him as his most intimate friends? Does not the great difference between the powers, dispositions, and future destinations of men, always render such distinctions

necessary? As Jesus had but little time to spend in imparting instruction himself, was it not particularly necessary for him to think upon this subject, and, out of the great mass of men, rough, ignorant, and usually blinded by prejudice, with whom he was surrounded, to select a small number as soon as possible, and prepare them for continuing his great work, by holding constant intercourse with them and giving them a more careful education? Was it not the prevailing custom for other Jewish teachers to do so, and was he ever noticed by his countrymen as singular in this respect? Should any one, however, assume that Jesus had other friends in addition to those now called confidants, who kept behind the curtain, and had to act silently in advancing his cause, and away from the view of the world, he takes up with a fiction in every respect destitute of proof. Were it lawful to treat history in such a manner, it might be shown with far more appearance of certainty, that Socrates, for instance, was at the head of such a band, and it would be easy to transform every great man into the director or founder of some secret order.

The mode of instruction employed by Jesus, was indeed regulated according to the different characters of his hearers, to which allusion has already been made; but it never bears any marks of that intentional obscurity and reserve to be noticed in the manner of those, who wish to have it understood, that they are in the possession of secrets which cannot be imparted to all. That Jesus often clothed the truths which he delivered in interesting parables,* is readily admitted. He did so, however, because the people were accustomed to this mode of instruction, and more easily excited by it to due reflection upon what they heard; but especially, because it enabled him to say many things

* Vid. Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet.*, l. III. p. 1. c. 5. [Compare also the excellent treatise by the worthy pupil and friend of Reinhard, Superint. Wilh. Christ. Gottl. Weise, of Hertzberg, *Diss. de more Domini acceptos a magistris Judaicis loquendi ac disserendi modos sapienter emendandi, quam praeside Reinhardo publ. def., Viteb., 1792, ab auctore recognita et multis augmentis locupleta in Velthusen etc. Commentatt. Theolog., Vol. V. nr. 8. p. 117—197.*]

in a way perfectly intelligible to the attentive and unprejudiced listener, but which the great mass of the people, did not understand,* and would have misapprehended and abused, had they been uttered in plain language. These parables, however, concealed no meaning with which it was not every man's business to become acquainted. They merely embodied the instructions, views, and representations, to which the men of that age were unaccustomed, and which stood in strong opposition to prevailing prejudices. These were the secrets of the kingdom of God, which the mixed multitude were as yet unable to receive without the disguise of imagery, and which were therefore laid by Jesus in the first place, before his intimate disciples. However attentively we examine the figurative narratives of Jesus which have been preserved by the Evangelists, not one of them will be found to contain any traces of mysterious references to secret enterprises and institutions, or any thing more than those doctrines, which, as soon as his entire history was sufficiently developed, and a multitude of the vain expectations entertained by the Jewish nation had been corrected, were delivered in public, and imparted to every adherent of Christianity. It would be very unjust in any one to blame Jesus for accommodating himself to the circumstances and necessities of his fellow citizens and friends, by letting himself down to their weak capacities, and passing over many things in silence, which, in the progress of his great work, would become intelligible of themselves. The wisest men of every age have looked upon such a benevolent condescension as necessary, and practised it, in imparting truth. He, however, who, from Christ's condescension in this respect, should infer that he taught in this way, out of compliance with the laws and regulations imposed upon him by a secret society, would evidently allow himself to jump at a conclusion, as every thing peculiar to his mode of teaching, can be rendered perfectly intelligible without this supposition.

* Comp. Hess, Ueber die Lehren, Thaten und Schicksale unsers Herrn, Abschn. VI. S. 175 ff., [according to the edition of 1806, B. II. Abschn. VII. S. 3—46;] and Storr, Opuscula Academica, Tom. I. diss. II. p. 89 seqq.

Finally, some have endeavored to explain away the miracles connected with Christ's institutions of instruction, of which accounts are given by the Evangelists, by considering them as the effects of certain physical secrets, which he is said to have possessed, and is conjectured to have obtained from some secret order, and declaring them the contrivances of his most private friends, who, by various preparations unknown to the apostles, may, it is thought, have accomplished that, which, though perfectly natural, would have appeared miraculous to those who saw not the machinery. None of this conjecturing, however, is worth the trouble of an answer. The fictitious means, which, in this case, Jesus is said to have employed for restoring health to the sick, must have possessed a power, no less wonderful than that which this supposition is designed to obviate. But what kind of a heart and judgement and what views must that man have, who can think it probable that even Jesus, devoted as his life was to the accomplishment of the exalted and divine object, the character of which I have described, should descend to juggling,—who can attempt to explain away a great part of his miracles by supposing them to have been performed by the secret machinery of an intimate order of brotherhood, and dare to think him capable of degrading himself so far as to engage in the miserable artifices of legerdemain! So senseless and constrained is the entire representation which some late writers have given of Christ's miracles in this respect, and the manner in which they have endeavored to explain them away, that not another word need be said upon the subject.* Enough! there is noth-

* [So judged Reinhard in 1789 and 1798; and so he judged also after the appearance of Paulus' Commentary. I here give his opinion in this respect as it was printed from a letter in his own handwriting: "What shall I say of the fat commentary of the Pseudo-Paul? Knoll and Spinoza, the most boyish remarks respecting the Greek text, and the most audacious and childish mode of reasoning respecting the contents of the N. Test., are, in this work, connected and mingled together in so curious a manner, as to leave the whole circle of literature no chance of ever again producing the like. The tone in which the praise of this monster of philology and philosophy has been trumpeted, is one of the signs of the times, and affords

ing in our Saviour's public institutions of instruction, which can justify us in supposing, that he was either a member or the founder of a secret society.

§ 47. There is as little to be found in confirmation of the supposition, if we take into consideration the private life of Jesus. Respecting the business in which he was engaged before he entered upon his public ministry, there are no accounts extant, worthy of credit. Various circumstances, however, render it very probable that he neither connected himself with a secret society nor founded one, before he was 30 years of age. Previous to the time in which he made his appearance in public, his fellow citizens, as well as his nearest relatives, unquestionably looked upon him as merely an ordinary man, and discovered in him nothing special or extraordinary. This is the reason why he was treated with such contempt by the people of Nazareth, where he had lived until the commencement of his public career, Luke 4: 16—30, and why even his relatives could not for a long time be convinced that he actually possessed any uncommon abilities, John 7: 1—5. Now just glance at the results which must be deduced from these circumstances. Had Jesus been connected with any secret society before he began to make himself known to the world, he would have found it difficult to prevent, at least those relatives who daily associated with him, and in whose business he was constantly engaged, from taking notice of him in this respect. It is impossible to maintain such connexions, without doing many things, or causing many things to be done, which attract the attention of others, and excite in them the be-

a proof, that we are not sufficiently learned to interpret the Scriptures in a real, grammatical manner, nor modest enough to philosophize upon them with propriety. Even this commentator, however, has failed in his attempt completely to naturalize Christianity, and put every thing that it contains of a supernatural character, out of view. Still, the evil which he will do in this respect, is not to be overlooked; as he confessedly possesses a certain acuteness, which enables him to dress up the most contorted exegesis, and is exactly adapted to blind our dear, theological youth, ignorant, as they are, of philological studies, and fonder of philosophizing than explaining from the *usus loquendi*, and lead them entirely astray."]

lief that such an one has something spécial in his mind. With all the conveniences and means which we now have at command for concealing our connexions with others from the eyes of the world, and divesting them of all appearance of strangeness, we find it very difficult to keep every thing secret. And would not Jesus, a man in the common walks of life, destitute of all these conveniences and means, and known to the whole village where he lived, have unavoidably been an object of special inquisitiveness to his fellow citizens, at least to his relatives and family friends, if he had maintained a correspondence involved in so many difficulties from the circumstances of that age ; if, from time to time, he had withdrawn himself from those around him, performed journeys, received visits from strangers, or excited the least suspicion in any way whatever, that he had distant acquaintances, and held intercourse with those whose views and characters were an impenetrable mystery ? And would not all these circumstances have been far more likely to strike the eyes, if Jesus had gone about the formation of a secret society during the first thirty years of his life ? Is it possible to accomplish such an object without associating and connecting one's self with various descriptions of men ? Persons of such views and feelings as Jesus had, are very rare. To discover such confidants, therefore, as Jesus is conjectured to have possessed, would it not have been necessary for him to enter into the most careful trials, and laborious examinations, and associate with all classes of people in the different employments of life ? Connected as this great work must have been, with numerous journeys, inquiries, arrangements, and external changes, would not somebody in Nazareth, at least some of his near relatives, have perceived that he was engaged in it ? Would not Jesus have been obliged to give it a degree of importance in the eyes of those that associated with him, previous to his entrance upon his public duties ?

From the commencement of his public career, Jesus lived almost incessantly before the eyes of the world, and under a pressure of labors, dangers, and cares, in which, he

could find but a very few hours for withdrawing himself entirely from the multitudes that followed after him. Of course, he had no time left to think of the formation of a secret society. It was completely filled up by him, in imparting instruction, healing the sick, attending carefully to the education of his apostles, and in the performance of journeys in their company or that of numerous crowds. During this period, indeed, he was far too much the object of public curiosity and attention, and too generally in a throng, even to hold intercourse with a *secret society* without being noticed, provided there had already been one in existence. It is true that he sometimes left his apostles, and, retiring into solitary places, spent whole nights all alone, Luke 6: 12 ; but will this fact authorize us to conjecture, that these moments were set apart for intercourse with confidential friends with whom he was never seen to have any connexion in public? What great men have not found it necessary occasionally to separate themselves from the crowd and retire into solitude, in order to recruit themselves by reflection and the enjoyment of repose away from the pressure of business? Does any one feel authorized to infer that they did so for the purpose of holding intercourse with secret societies? If this be improbable with regard to men, who spent many hours in solitude, why should we conjecture it to be true with regard to Jesus? Did he not also occasionally find such retirement necessary? He was compelled to withdraw and conceal himself when restless crowds wished to place him at their head, and excite an insurrection, John 6: 15. Not even the apostles, who almost always remained near by, ever suspected that on such occasions, he retired into solitary places, in order to hold intercourse with confidential, and to them unknown friends. On the other hand, they expressly assert, that these precious moments were spent in contemplations, for which he could find no time in the tu-

* Comp. Zimmermann, Ueber die Einsamkeit, Th. 1. S. 49 ff. [Zimmermann's Solitude, Part I. p. 43 seqq., Lond., 1804. Tr.]

mult of business ;—in self-repose, in collecting his thoughts, and raising his heart to God. In a single instance, they inform us, that he was visited at Jerusalem in the night by a ruler of the Jews called Nicodemus, John 3: 2. Nicodemus, however, was not at that time one of Christ's followers, it being his chief object to form a more intimate acquaintance with him by means of conversation ; and we know what was done at this visit, which was made perhaps in the presence of the apostles, from the account given of it by John. There is room indeed to conjecture that the forty days, passed by Jesus in the wilderness, about the remarkable time of his entrance upon his public ministry, were spent in holding intercourse with secret associations, but there is room for nothing more, as the Evangelists make no mention of any such thing. Besides, it should be remembered, that history contains many examples of men who have retired in like manner preparatory to entering upon important business ; that as Jesus was now about to make his appearance in public, it was in some measure necessary for him to break away from the connexions among whom he had lived, and retire awhile from the view of men in order to make the commencement of his public ministry the more remarkable ; and finally, that as he was about to leave common occupations and engage in one of the noblest, most exalted of callings, such a space of time was devoutly to be desired, for collecting his thoughts and for quiet reflection. With this view of the subject before us, it is easy to show why Jesus withdrew from the eyes of men without resorting to a supposition grounded upon a mere conjecture.

§ 48. I come now to the language and mode of expression to be met with in the writings of Christ's apostles. It is certain that these men before the death of Jesus, were incapable of becoming the members of such a secret fraternity as that must have been, which is said to have been engaged in the execution of Christ's undertakings. He therefore, who maintains that a secret fraternity existed, must admit that they were not initiated into its genuine mysteries nor made acquainted with its internal character,

until after that event. So far are some from denying this, that they have even begun to point out expressions and modes of representation in reference to the fact, which are to be considered as fragments of the old symbolical language of the order. As the number of phrases brought forward to be explained upon this hypothesis is very great, it cannot be expected that I should enter upon a particular examination of them with reference to this subject. A few general reflections will be sufficient to show the utter groundlessness of this supposition, and its direct opposition to the principles of correct interpretation.

There are but two cases in which any one, who would avoid total uncertainty in regard to the meaning of the ancient writings that have come down to us, can be justified in searching an ancient author for allusions to secret associations, and for symbolical, arbitrary, and conventional modes of speech, peculiar to some order. The *first* is, when there are unquestionable accounts extant, which prove that he was in reality the member of such a society, and treated of subjects relating to it in his works; the *second*, when his words cannot be rationally explained in any other way than upon the supposition that they have a secret meaning. If an interpreter were permitted to search for the language of a secret order without being obliged to do so, or being justified in the act, either by history or the nature of the case, by internal or external reasons, it would be very easy to transform every ancient writer into the member of some secret fraternity and discover mystical symbols in his expressions. Now, by applying these principles, universally admitted to be correct, to the writings of the apostles, it will be easy to arrive at a conclusion; for no real, historical evidence has as yet been brought forward in proof of the existence of a secret society to which they may have belonged, and to the character of which they may have occasionally alluded in their writings. Here, then, the first circumstance requisite to justify an interpreter in conjecturing that they made use of mystical terms and enigmatical modes of expression, is entirely wanting. The same is also true of

the second; for what passages are there in the writings of the apostles, which contain no rational meaning, unless understood of the mysteries of some secret order? That the style of the apostles is in many respects, dark and enigmatical is perhaps not to be denied. This is the case however, merely because they thought, and expressed themselves like Jews. So evidently does their language partake of the character of that which we find in the old Greek and Hebrew writings of their nation, that all their obscure expressions can be satisfactorily explained by a reference to the *usus loquendi* of those writings. The most learned and acute interpreters of the N. Testament have at all times not only maintained this, but exhibited incontestible proof of it in their works. And this is exactly what we should expect. It is natural to conclude that any man will think and express himself according to the mode prevalent in his nation. Now where the resemblance between the *usus loquendi* of an author and that of the nation to which he belonged, is so striking as it is in regard to the apostles, if we suppose that he used the language in a mystical sense, we must admit that all other writers of his nation used it in the same way. This position however cannot be maintained, for it would lead to an absurdity. Nothing is left therefore for us to do, in attempting to give an explanation of his writings, but to concede that he used the language in its ordinary acceptation, and give up all idea of searching after a hidden sense. Now the ordinary method employed for ascertaining the meaning of the writings of the apostles, furnishes us with whatever is requisite to get out of them in all cases a good and connected sense, and discover in these books the most exalted truths of the most excellent religion. What then can justify an interpreter in subjoining another method, not only altogether superfluous, but grounded upon a mere conjecture, and too destitute of foundation to be admitted into the rank of a probable hypothesis? If a man goes so capriciously and violently to work in his interpretations, all exegetical confidence is at an end, and we must admit that any thing can be made out of every thing,

and consequently that the old writings mean nothing with any degree of certainty.

§ 49. Farther; had it in reality been Christ's intention to employ a secret society for carrying his great plan into effect, we should find some traces of it, at least in the undertakings of his friends after his death. History, however, furnishes us with nothing, in justification of this opinion. It is as clear as the sun, that, when the friends of Jesus began to teach and to collect a church in Jerusalem, they had no intention of constituting a secret order, operating in silence, and obliging those whom they received into their society, to keep certain things concealed. They taught frankly and in public. They did not require those who wished to have access to their meetings, or join their body, to undergo a long and careful trial. They sometimes admitted several thousands as members at once, and did it so directly in view of the magistrates, that these last found it necessary to interpose obstacles in the way of the work at its very commencement, and hinder the apostles' undertakings by the interposition of power. There is not room even for a conjecture that these external results were the effects of secret springs, which, though invisible, put every thing in action, and kept it so. In such a case the apostles *must have either been members of this directing society and at the same time the executors of its plans, or not have belonged to it at all.* If we take the last position, we not only assert something which cannot be proved, (for how can we ascertain whether a secret society existed which could keep its existence unknown to the apostles?) but something which is utterly impossible. It is absolutely inconceivable how the apostles could have been the mere tools of a secret society, and under obligations to act with reference to the views of others, without observing it, and feeling a direct dependance in regard to the business to which they had devoted their lives. Were they, however, at the same time, members of a secret order established by Jesus for the execution of his plan, we may justly ask, by what circumstances and accounts this is to be proved? Why, in such a case, do

the undertakings of the apostles exhibit no more regularity and connexion? Why do they allow themselves to be influenced so much by incidental circumstances? Why do they not always agree among themselves, and in all respects follow the same rules? * Why cannot we fix upon some central point, from which all management emanated, and all the churches which arose received commands for the regulation of their conduct? Finally, why do the letters, which the apostles wrote with the greatest frankness, to their confidential friends respecting the affairs of Christianity, contain nothing which can be referred to unnamed overseers?—nothing which required Christians to look to some other head than themselves, and robbed individual churches of their freedom and independence? Is it possible to conceive how a society having for its object the renovation of the whole human family, could operate efficaciously without most accurately dividing the immense field of its labor, into greater and smaller circles, and demanding the strictest subordination of all its various directors? Where, however, is the historical proof, that such a well contrived, systematic plan ever existed among the first Christian churches? On the other hand, does not ev-

* [No one will misunderstand the author, and stretch his assertions so far, as to make him admit that the apostles disagreed among themselves, as to the essentials of Christianity, and consequently deviated from the doctrines of Jesus. From this view of the subject, he was very far removed, as any one will perceive, who only reads his sermons, J. 1798, Cantate I. 334; "That was the genuine spirit of Christ which operated in his apostles;" and J. 1803, the three sermons, Jubilate, Cantate, u. Rogate, II. 1 ff.; "How important it must be to us that the apostles of Jesus, notwithstanding all the increase of their experience and reflection in life, retained the same dispositions and feelings towards Jesus until death." The author unquestionably refers to the difference which once arose between Peter and Paul, Gal. 2: 11; in which case, however, Peter by no means cherished an erroneous conviction of the truth, (as he had not merited a severe censure from Paul but only a gentle rebuke,) but on the other hand, under the influence of the fear of man, had yielded in regard to his conviction of the truth, to the dispositions and requisitions of the Jews. "Non enim," says Pope Felagius II. upon this subject, (Acta Concill., ed. Harduin, Tom. III. col. 427,) "mutatio sententiae, sed inconstantia sensus in culpa est." Respecting the different regulations of the first Christian Church, vid. Neander's K. G., I. 2. 599 ff.]

ery thing that we know respecting the condition of the Christian church at this time, contradict this supposition?

Nor will the measures of the *primitive Christians* for concealing certain doctrines and sacred ceremonies, authorize us to conclude that certain mysterious regulations existed at the times of the apostles and their immediate successors; for the origin of these measures cannot be extended so far back as to the end of the first century;* nor can it ever be proved that something was to be concealed from the heathen, and the novices in Christianity, even in compliance with apostolical directions.† On the contrary, various reasons can be drawn from history sufficient to show why Christians of the second century, were gradually induced to maintain a reserve in imparting their instructions, and practising their sacred ceremonies.‡ The supposition that they did so, because, ever since the formation of their societies, they had been under the control of a secret order, or had wished to be considered as such an

* As Lessing has said, *Theologische Nachlass*, S. 197 ff., with which however should be compared the remarks of Bingham, *Origin. Eccl.*, Vol. IV. p. 119 ff., respecting the *disciplina arcani* so called, and its origin.

† That the apostles had no such thing as a secret doctrine, which they imparted to but a few, is shown by Tertullian, *De Praescript. Haeret.*, c. 25, 26, [ed. Rigalt, Par., 1641., p. 240 seqq.]

‡ Vid. Schröckh, *Christliche Kirchengeschichte*, Th. IV. S. 372 ff.; [Neander's *K. G.*, I. 2. 540, Anmerkung: (Speaking of the habit of making the use of confessions of faith imparted only by word of mouth to mean, that the most sacred things cannot be committed to writing or made known to the uninitiated, without being divested of their sanctity, he says;) "This mystical playfulness and show, to which had been attributed more importance than it originally possessed, gave occasion for the invention of a *Disciplina Arcani*, a notion obscure, indefinite, and unhistorical, and hence, out of which it was possible to make every thing."]

[A few remarks may be found upon the subject in Mosheim, Vol. I. pp. 88, 100, 307. 'The teachers of the ancient church,' says Schröckh, 'have never given an accurate explanation of what they meant by their secret institutions, their secret wisdom, or *Disciplina Arcani*. The Romish church afterwards made use of the notion for the purpose of thence deducing certain positions which are not to be met with in the Scriptures, and do not belong to the Christian religion. Hence many extensive disputes have been carried on upon the subject.' Tr.]

order, admits of no confirmation. Besides, the doctrines and ceremonies which were kept secret by means of these private institutions, were not those which the secret fraternity, said to have been founded by Jesus, is affirmed to have had in view, and of course cannot be considered as having any thing to do with it.

§ 50. It may appear somewhat striking, however, at first glance, that Clemens of Alexandria and Origen his pupil frequently assert, that there were secrets existing in the bosom of the church, of which Jesus was the author, who imparted them only to his apostles and some select friends, and that these secrets had never been committed to writing, but were propagated orally, and could be known only to a few. The language of Clemens upon this subject in particular, is calculated to excite a general suspicion that there was a society in the midst of the church, invisible to common eyes, which had received many things from Jesus, of which the great body of Christians were totally ignorant.* The more, however, any one becomes acquainted with the language and mode of thinking peculiar to this man, the less room will he find for this suspicion, and the fewer traces will he discover of the existence of such a society. It was the custom in Alexandria to speak of higher secrets. Philo had already said much respecting a secret wisdom which could not be imparted to all.† Clemens, and after him Origen, speak in like manner of this wisdom, with the sole difference that they derive it from Jesus. As no account, however, is given of any such secrets by the other writers of the ancient church, we are unavoidably reduced to the supposition, that this was a mode of expression peculiar to the Alexandrian school, and by an acquaintance with its peculiarities we

* For example, Strom., l. I. from the very beginning, especially at p. 322 seqq., Potter's ed.; [Sylburg's ed., p. 274 seqq.] Comp. also a passage of the same author, found in Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., l. II. c. 1. Origen expresses his opinion upon this subject, contra Cels., l. V. c. 6. p. 633. 634, Delar. ed.

† Philo's System, in Eichhorn's Bibliothek der bibl. Litteratur, B. IV. S. 775 ff., also S. 780 ff. [Neander's K. G., I. 1. 74 f., and Entwicklung der Gnost. Systeme, S. 6 ff.]

shall probably be enabled to conclude with some degree of certainty in what these celebrated secrets consisted. The above named school is known to have been distinguished for philosophizing upon the doctrines of Christianity, and searching the Scriptures, even in historical parts, after traces of a hidden and higher sense, an acquaintance with which they declared to be a secret knowledge, (*Gnosis*,) to which every one could not attain.* Hence, the writings of Clemens and Origen are full of allegorical interpretations, and far-fetched philosophemes, and in these respects they had learned predecessors at Alexandria, particularly Philo the Jew, who makes this allegorical and philosophizing mode of explaining the Scriptures the main source of the secrets of which he so often speaks. If now we compare the passages in which Clemens and Origen make mention of the secrets said to have been received from Jesus and preserved by oral tradition, it will appear to the highest degree probable, that they understood nothing more by them than that spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, which can be apprehended by those only who are capable of penetrating beyond the letter.† Hence, it is so natural for these men to refer to this higher sense, and that too with a mysterious air, and a kind of reserve which seems unwilling to reveal too much, that they do so throughout their writings. On the other hand, we do not find in them the least indication of a secret society which governed in silence, exerted an especial influence upon the church, and took the lead in its affairs.

* Grabe, *Spicilegium S. S. Patrum*, Tom. I. p. 328, and Mosheim, *De rebus Christianorum ante Constant. M.*, p. 629 seqq. [Neander's *K. G.*, I. 3. 942, 947 ff.]

† Vid. Mosheim's note to his translation of Origen against Celsus, B. VI. S. 599 ff., to which add Semler's suspicion founded in truth, that Clemens had some predilection for the philosophemes of the Gnostics, *Histor. Einleitung zu Baumgartens Untersuchung theologischer Streitigkeiten*, Th. I. S. 181, and every thing will be rendered still more intelligible. The Gnostics, as will be remarked farther on, were in the habit of announcing their fanciful conceits to be secret doctrines which they had received by means of oral tradition. Comp. Irenaeus, *Advers. Haeres.*, l. III. c. 2. p. 174, 175, Massuet. ed.

§ 51. Admitting the above view to be correct, nothing farther remains in ancient history which can be looked upon as such an indication, except what is said of the Gnostic parties. Here and there we actually discover allusions to them, giving us to understand that the very secrets which Jesus deposited in the bosom of a secret order, had for a long time been preserved by these sects. It cannot be denied indeed that most of the Gnostic parties had something mysterious in them.* Hence the reason why many of them, particularly the Valentinians, exercised such caution in the choice of persons to be admitted into their fraternities, and maintained a greater reserve in gradually imparting their secrets to new members, than any other secret societies that have ever existed.† Moreover they had much to do with symbols, as is evident from what has come down to us respecting the Ophites‡ and Basilidians.§ Indeed, the principal cause of the impenetrable obscurity in which the doctrines of all the Gnostic sects are veiled, and in which their opinions appear to us to be a most intricate tissue of senseless dreams, is unquestionably to be sought for in the mystical language which they employed. It was not understood even by those ancient writers, whose accounts we are obliged to follow in tracing the history of the Gnostics, and of course we shall be far less able fully to decipher it.|| Some however are

* Some of them went so far as to appeal to the fact that their system of truth was a secret which Jesus had intrusted to but a few. Comp. Mosheim, Ueber die Ophiten, § LIV. S. 106, and De Rebus Christ. ante Constant., Sec. 1. § LXIII. p. 185.

† Vid. Walch, Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Kätzer-eyen, Th. I. S. 380-382.

‡ Compare Walch's work just quoted, Th. I. S. 290 ff.

§ Mosheim, Versuch einer unpartheyischen und gründlichen Kätzergeschichte, und Schumacher, Erläuterung der dunkeln und schweren Lehrtafel der alten Ophiten oder Schlangenbrüder, nach den geheimen Grundsätzen der Kabbalisten abgefasst, belong to this place.

|| Many of them maintained expressly that Jesus imparted secret doctrines to his apostles, with a commission to make them known to but a few, trusty persons. Vid. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., l. 1. c. 24. p. 104; [also, II. 46. p. 172. Grab.]

inclined to admit without any proof, that these sects were branches of a secret society established by Jesus himself. Every thing that has been preserved of their doctrines and opinions is certainly very obscure, and their modes of representation appear at first glance to agree very little together. It can be made quite evident, however, that the main object of all these sects was, to substitute rational religion instead of revealed.* Now who that has read the writings of the apostles, can admit this to have been our Saviour's object? These societies, for the most part, thought very meanly of the writings of Christ's apostles, treated them in a very capricious manner, and, under a veil of obscure figures and difficult symbolical representations, labored with especial diligence to extend the quite abortive speculations of reason respecting the origin of the world and the evil it contains. Could they possibly have been the continuation of an institution established by Jesus, of which the apostles were the oldest members? The foreign origin of all these sects is also immediately betrayed by the figures and modes of representation which they had in common; for the manner in which they clothed and delivered their instructions, bears not the least resemblance to that of the friends of Jesus. Moreover it can be proved that the chief dogmas of the Gnostics existed before Christianity and prevailed in the East.† These

* 1. Comp. Semler, *Geschichte der Christlichen Glaubenslehre*, in the first part of Baumgarten's *Untersuchung theologischer Streitigkeiten*, S. 121 ff.

2. Mosheim in his work, *Ueber die Schlangenbrüder*, declares himself in the most decided manner opposed to the opinion here quoted, and maintains that in regard to the Gnostics, every thing must be understood literally. § XXVII—XXX. S. 44 ff. [Comp. also Neander, *Gnost. Systeme*, S. 94 ff. 235. 260. 264.]

† Vid. Michaelis, *De indiciis Gnosticae philosophiae tempore LXX. interpretum et Philonis Judaei*, in the *Syntagma Commentationum*, Tom. II. p. 251 seqq., where also is to be found a lecture upon this subject very much to the purpose, by Walsch, *De philosophia orientali, Gnosticorum systematum fonte et origine*. The latter upon the subject is also to be seen in the *Entwurf der Kätzerhistorie*, Th. I. S. 241 ff.; [Neander, *Gnost. Systeme*, *Einleitung*, *Elemente der Gnosis im Philo*, S. 1—27.]

sects, therefore, could not have been the keepers of the genuine principles delivered by Jesus. On the other hand, they took their rise in opinions altogether at variance with Christianity, and of course, while they retained what was consistent with their own strange conjectures, they in a great measure rejected its real and demonstrable doctrines. On this point the primitive Christians were unanimous; for they considered all the Gnostics as errorists, very far removed in their views and feelings from the doctrines taught in the Gospel. Indeed the writings of the apostles bear no very obscure traces of having been written on purpose to controvert many of the positions afterwards maintained by these parties. This, in particular, appears to have been a principal object of John in all his writings; some leading doctrines of this kind having even then been partially blended with Christianity, though none who advocated them bore the name of Gnostics.* This circumstance in this matter is perfectly decisive; for we must either maintain that the apostles were ignorant of the object which their teacher had in view, (and from whom with confidence can we expect a true explanation of Christ's intentions, if not from them?) or we must admit that the Gnostic sects, whose leading doctrines they rejected, were the remnants of a secret society which understood Christ's genuine meaning, and was to execute his plan.

§ 52. We have now examined every thing which appears to contain any marks or traces of a secret order formed by Jesus for the execution of his plan, and shown that nothing is to be found which can be considered as substantial proof that such an order ever existed. This of itself would be sufficient even now to justify us in declaring every thing that has been said respecting an association by means of which Jesus intended to operate, to be empty fiction. We shall

* Comp. Michaelis, *Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften des neuen Bundes*, Th. II. § 149 u. 150. [Marsh's Michaelis, Vol. III. Chap. VII. Sec. V. Tr.;] and a learned and circumstantial confirmation of this affair in Storr's work, *Ueber den Zweck der evangelischen Geschichte und der Briefe Johannis*, S. 43 ff.

be able however to draw this conclusion with far greater certainty, if some additional things and circumstances be pointed out, which are very clearly opposed to the position that Jesus intended to make use of such means.

Here Christ's own language may be quoted. In more than one instance, his very expressions are of such a character as directly to contradict the idea, that he operated by means of private institutions. He told his friends explicitly, that they should resemble a city set on a high hill, which, on account of its position, cannot be hid; that they should be a light for illuminating the whole world; and ought never to think of keeping any thing secret, Matt. 5: 13, 16. He announced to them in plain terms, that the extension of his doctrines would excite great commotions, and draw down severe persecutions upon his friends, Matt. 10: 21—32. Had it been his intention to advance his object by secret springs, he must have charged his apostles to avoid all public curiosity, and shun the very appearance of general movements. Instead of doing so, however, and making it their duty to maintain a suspicious reserve and operate in secret, he commanded them to teach every thing that he had delivered to them, with boldness, and preach what he had told them in the ear, upon the house-top, Matt. 10: 26, 27. Stronger expressions could not well have been employed for showing that he wished them to act with perfect frankness, and avoid every thing like mystery. Of the same character is all the instruction which Jesus imparted to his apostles in his last familiar discourses with them, John xiv.—xvi., respecting the manner in which they were to labor for the accomplishment of his object after his death. They were to do every thing in public, and without a shrinking reserve. They were not to hesitate, should they be complained of, persecuted, and oppressed, for their candid and open efforts. They were to remember that his frankness of action had drawn down upon him the same fate, John 15: 18—21, and that the object before them was to effect a radical improvement, which could not be done without great public commotion, John 16: 8—11. It appears

even that Jesus intended expressly to guard his followers and friends against being entangled with societies, in which he referred to something secret and mysterious. The admonition which he is known to have given them against believing any, who, during the last calamitous times of the Jewish state, should try to persuade them that Christ was here or there, was in the desert or in secret places, Matt. 24: 23—26, can have no other meaning. His object undoubtedly was to make his followers suspicious of all secret institutions, notwithstanding they promised great things and excited seducing hopes. Finally, the declaration which Jesus made respecting himself before Annas the high priest, when interrogated as to his disciples and doctrines, is worthy of particular attention. Jesus told him in the strongest terms, that he had never labored in a corner, nor taught nor attempted anything in secret; that he had delivered his instructions in the synagogues and the temple, where all could hear him, and hence, that people were to be found in every place, who were well acquainted with whatever he had said or done, John 18: 19—21. Jesus could not possibly have given such an answer, had he been a member or the founder of a secret society. Those, therefore, who attribute to him the formation of such an association and make him operate by its means, do it in direct opposition to his own plain assertions.

§ 53. To these lucid declarations of Jesus, some other circumstances may be added, which cannot possibly be made to agree with the supposition that I am now controverting. Every step that Jesus took was watched with great attention. His enemies, drawn together by his frankness in large numbers, examined every thing that he did with uncommon eagerness, and were ready on all occasions to lay hold of any thing that could be made use of to his prejudice. It is difficult to conceive, therefore, how the secret and quite extensive connexions which Jesus is said to have had, could have remained altogether undiscovered. From history, however, it appears to be an undisputed fact, that nothing of the kind was ever thought

of, nor the least suspicion ever excited, that Jesus was laboring in secret to raise up a strong party in his own favor. When brought before Pilate, he was not accused of having formed a secret conspiracy, but of having endeavored to excite a public insurrection. So firmly convinced were the people that if he were taken out of the way, there was nothing more to fear, that they did not even take the trouble of securing his friends. They were considered, and justly too, as a weak company, which would disperse of themselves as soon as their leader was removed. In this opinion the Jewish magistrates must have been greatly confirmed by the fact, that the traitor, one of his twelve confidants and constant associates, of whose aid they availed themselves in taking Jesus, gave them no information respecting his being engaged in secret combinations. Had this faithless wretch known any thing of the kind, or even suspected that Jesus had been able to form secret plans and undertake their execution, he would not have passed it over in silence ; and had his master been connected with any private associations, would it have been possible for him not to have discovered it during three years of uninterrupted intercourse? Moreover the conduct of Jesus as represented in the history of his life, is altogether dissimilar to that of those who have founded secret associations, or had intercourse with them. One of the strongest traits of his character was an unshrinking, unconstrained frankness. He on all occasions and with energy made known the truth in public, even where it was dangerous to utter it. A man who forms secret societies, and employs them as the means of operation, is reserved and must be so. He will be accustomed to labor in silence and retirement, rather than openly and in the rush of a crowd. Jesus chose his confidential friends without any of those delays indicative of a doubtful state of mind, and connected them with him without requiring them to pass through a course of trial or a variety of preparatory exercises. We all know with what caution those proceed, who are in search of members for a secret society ;—what observations, what inquiries, what examinations are requisite, before they can

resolve upon receiving a stranger, and admitting him into important mysteries. The men whom Jesus chose for his associates, were unlearned, and taken from the common walks of life. They had no knowledge of the world or mankind, were destitute of wealth and power, and in no respects distinguished for natural talents. For nothing were they less fitted, than taking an active part in plans which required a refined and penetrating wisdom, and being initiated into important secrets. I need not say how entirely different those act, in making choice of their associates, who aim at accomplishing any thing by means of secret unions. There are many private societies in silent operation, the object of whose labors must yield in importance and extent to that which Jesus had to advance, and yet none of them would bid such men as the apostles were, a very hearty welcome to their fraternities, or admit them as members, much less take up altogether with such. The closer, therefore, we scrutinize whatever Jesus said and did, the more we discover in his conduct entirely at variance with the conjecture, that he founded a secret order, and intended to use it as the means of operation. This opinion is not only wholly destitute of all historical proof, but it stands in direct opposition to unquestionable matters of fact. We may justly draw the conclusion, therefore, that Jesus never intended to put the hidden springs of a secret society in motion for the execution of his plan; that in what he undertook for the advancement of truth and happiness among mankind, he not only did not employ a means of operation, which wise men have at all times looked upon as very useful, but that he absolutely disapproved of it and rejected it, in a manner sufficiently intelligible both in his words and actions.

JESUS CHOSE THE GENTLEST MEANS POSSIBLE.

§ 54. Of course, none but the gentlest means now remain, by which such a benevolent plan as Jesus had in view, could have been carried into effect; namely, that of

convincing instruction, connected with institutions for quickening the moral sensibilities, arousing the human mind to reflect upon its most important concerns, and warm it with a living zeal for the attainment of its true destination.* It is too obvious to be denied, that Jesus not only labored in this way himself for carrying his plan into effect, but even prohibited his apostles from making use of any other method. History informs us that instruction was the principal means of which he availed himself, when he entered upon its execution. That he never employed power to obtain adherents to his cause, has already been shown. It is as certain that he never dazzled any with external splendor, for the poverty in which he lived struck the eyes of every one. He did not ~~not~~ flatter the ambition, avarice, and sensuality of his fellow citizens with the hopes of future gain. On the other hand, he frankly told all who wished to join him, that they would have to suffer much in the cause of the truth, and must resolve to sacrifice every thing for its sake. The very miracles that he wrought were employed solely for the purpose of exciting attention to his instruction, and procuring for him the necessary respect. Instruction, therefore, was the principal means of which he intended to avail himself in the accomplishment of his object; and by looking at the manner in which he proceeded in this respect, we shall be astonished at the carefulness with which he ever honored the freedom of the human mind, and in all cases sought to create rational convictions of the truth. A special object of his efforts evidently was, to excite reflection in all those who heard him, and bring them to make a candid examination for themselves. Hence, he never sought to take any one by surprise. He even laid obstacles in the way of and rejected those, who, without sufficient consideration, and under the influence of a rash zeal, offered to become his disciples, Luke 9: 57--62. Sometimes he merely laid down premises, and recommended them to the attention of his hearers, in order to furnish them with

* [Compare the author's sermon, J. 1798, *Misericord. Domini*, I. 293; "Considerations respecting the choice of the means by which Jesus intended to collect a church".]

an opportunity for making, by their own contemplations, those deductions which he passed over in silence, Matt. 10: 37—39. Often he did directly the opposite to what was demanded of him, without verbally contradicting prevailing prejudices, and left it with those who saw him act, to examine into the reasons of his conduct. He labored very zealously to promote the use of a sound understanding in the affairs of religion, and sought in every way to make it evident, that as soon as a man, in attending to its doctrines, neglects the aid of that faculty given us by nature for perceiving the truth, and by means of which we are so happily guided in the every day business of life, he judges in a very false and disconnected manner, and involves himself in the most disgraceful contradictions.* Sometimes he raised doubts on purpose to promote reflection and induce farther investigations, Matt. 22: 41—46. Mark 11: 27.

For the same reason, he often clothed his instructions in fictions and fables, such a mode of imparting truth being not only interesting and attractive, but necessarily requiring the hearer to make his own application and interpretation, and calling the powers of his judgement into healthful exercise. He delighted in reconciling contradictions, and with incredible patience condescended to refute the most senseless objections and the wickedest reproaches. In so doing, he never broke out in fiery condemnation, but always justified himself with a calm earnestness, and a noble temperance, while at the same time, he often freely told his opponents of the unhappy consequences which their extreme obstinacy would necessarily draw down upon them. He never forced the truth upon any one. All that he sought to do in its favor, was, by wise, gentle, and agreeable means, to represent it in an amiable and convincing light. He did not consider it of so much importance for men to *believe*, as for them to *believe aright*, and with *reason* and *reflection*. Hence, he never allowed himself to employ any of those arts of per-

* For examples, vid. Matt. 12: 9—12. Luke 14: 1—6. Matt. 23: 16—33, &c.

suasion which delude. He could speak, indeed, with an eloquence which melted every heart, and affected even his enemies, Luke 4: 22. John 7: 45, 46. His eloquence, however, consisted not in the art of getting the advantage over a person by arguments rather dazzling than true, nor in the faculty of astonishing and bearing away an audience with a splendor of words and a flowing elocution, without instructing and convincing them. It produced its effects solely by means of the enlightening truth contained in what he said. The naturalness, simplicity, distinctness, and strength, with which he taught every where, proved in a clear and correct manner; and instead of deceiving with their splendor, gently illuminated the mind without corrupting or constraining the heart, and brought into disgrace those sophistical jugglings to which error alone is obliged to resort for defence. He most conscientiously and tenderly regarded the laws of the human mind, solemnly appealed to them in investigating the most exalted subjects of human knowledge, and made as great efforts as possible to conquer merely by reason and the power of the truth. Instruction, and instruction of which every one was at liberty to avail himself, delivered without any mysterious reserve, and open to the freest and most acute examination, constituted the principal means of which Jesus availed himself for the accomplishment of his plan.

At the same time, Jesus made arrangements for preserving and propagating this instruction, giving it life and power, rendering his followers more intimate with it, and obedient to it, and keeping their minds in healthful and perpetual action; and especially for nourishing and cherishing that love which was to unite them together, and lead them on in the way of virtue and happiness. It was his intention in particular, that his adherents should form themselves into a visible society, that they should constitute a church, Matt. 16: 18. This society, however, this church, was not in the least degree to change or disturb their civil relations. As the objects of this union were solely of a moral character, every one might become a member of it

without neglecting the calling which he had chosen, or forsaking the post to which he had been assigned by the state. Every society, however, must have marks for distinguishing its members, and means for preserving the connexion which exists between them, and accomplishing the object for which it was formed; must have institutions for cherishing those dispositions and feelings, and that spirit which are to animate the whole, and promote the welfare of every part. Jesus took care that the society which he intended to establish should be furnished with such institutions. It was to have a solemnity for the initiation of new members. The ceremony which Jesus appointed for this purpose, was neither a terrific and painful one, like the circumcision of his countrymen, nor a mysterious one, connected with great preparations like those of the heathen. His followers were to be consecrated by the simple, but significant use of water, as a solemn purification, reminding them that they were now to become members of a community which required of them unspotted purity of heart and life, Matt. 28: 19. John 3: 5. As however, the continuance and prosperity of this community, depended entirely upon the preservation and operation of the sacred truths and principles committed to its charge, so the consecrated were to remind each other of the great object of their union, and mutually stimulate each other to its attainment, by carefully meeting together, holding up to view and inculcating these important doctrines, and by means of touching exercises, endeavoring to render the excitement thus produced, strong and powerful. In a word, they were to use every possible means, not only for procuring a permanent place in the very heart, for the substance of the joyful message brought them by their Lord and Master from heaven, but for promoting the welfare of the human race by spreading it throughout the world, Matt. 18: 15—20. 28: 20. The accomplishment of this object, depended very much upon the preservation of the spirit of unity and love, which was to distinguish this new community from all others and be the means of renovating and improving the world and rendering it happy. The only sure way of effecting this, was, by a repeated and

tender recollection of the author of this union, and his magnanimous sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Hence, with the pious meetings held by the members of this church, was from time to time to be connected a religious and fraternal repast, on which occasions they were to call to mind the last supper which he eat in confidence with his disciples, on the very evening before his death. Whenever they did so, in imitation of his example, they were to take bread and wine, and in partaking of the first, to think how his body was tortured and offered a sacrifice for sin, and in receiving the last, to think how his blood was shed for them. In this way, they were to celebrate the remembrance of his love and death, and, while animated by reflecting upon them, to bind themselves to most unshaken fidelity in his service, and the most active benevolence towards each other, Matt. 26: 26—28. Mark 14: 22—24. Luke 22: 19, 20. He laid down no other precepts respecting the external form of his church. It was left entirely with the apostles to form such other regulations as they should find best adapted to their wants and the circumstances of the age.

§ 55. The rules which he laid down for the direction of his apostles in executing his plan, have a close agreement with these general principles. They were never to think of striving after civil power, or any other influence than that, which could be obtained by exhibiting the truth and setting a virtuous example, Luke 22: 24—27. 1 Peter 5: 2, 3. They were to gain none by promising them earthly advantage, but they were ever to inculcate upon their hearers the truth, that virtue must look for its full reward to another world, Matt. 10: 37—39. They were not to constitute a secret society, nor operate by secret arts, but to go forth into all the world, and make known the truth freely, and publicly to all nations, Matt. 28: 19, 20. Acts 1: 8.* In so doing, they were not merely to enjoin

* That they did so, is evident not merely from *history*. In their Epistles, they appeal expressly to the churches which had been established in proof of the fact, that they had employed neither cunning nor secret institutions, for the purpose of gaining advocates to their cause, 2 Cor. 4: 2. 1 Thes. 2: 3, 4.

it upon every one to believe their word, but they were to call upon every one to hear their reasons and examine them for themselves. Wherever they found people, who advocated the truth, they were to establish institutions for the preservation and extension of a more thorough acquaintance with it. Hence they were to prepare men by education for teaching others, and institute meetings and exercises for the common information and encouragement of all the professors of this pure religion. In their efforts indeed they were not to allow themselves to be checked or disturbed by vetos or magisterial power, Matt. 10: 17—33. John 15: 17 to chap. 16: 4, for no earthly ruler has a right to prohibit his subjects from receiving this religion, addressing itself as it does, to the conscience, or to lay down precepts for directing them in attending to their moral education and the welfare of their souls, Acts 4: 19, 20. On the other hand, they were not to allow those who wished to become of their number, to occasion any discord in society, or, under any pretence whatever, to transgress the several relations to which they had been assigned, 1 Cor. 7: 17—22, or refuse to give due honor to their rulers, and yield the most willing and punctual obedience to their lawful regulations, Rom. 13: 1—7. 1 Pet. 2: 13—17. Tit. 3: 1. They were rather to aim earnestly at transforming all the advocates of the truth into the most diligent, faithful, and useful citizens, by inculcating it upon them, as a general principle, that they were bound to honor the doctrines which they professed, and advance the truth as much as possible, by exhibiting the most upright and dignified conduct in all their relations, Matt. 5: 16. 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12. Phil. 1: 27. Col. 1: 10. Tit. 2: 5—10. In this way then, was the truth to conquer of itself. It needed no foreign aid. The nations of the earth would gradually ascertain, that it would be for their interests in every respect, to embrace it and obey it. All those also, who gave themselves up to the advancement of the Saviour's great views, were to expect the protection and assistance of heaven, which was of far more importance than the favor of the world; for the plan in which

Jesus was engaged, was the work of God, John 4: 34, with chap. xvii. It was the object of the Governor of the world, and of the Father of mankind, to bless the whole human family and give the inhabitants of the earth the highest proof of his infinite love, by carrying this great undertaking into effect.

Such is the great plan, which, according to historical testimony, Jesus devised for the good of our race, and such are the means which were to be employed for carrying it into complete effect. That it has been misapprehended and misrepresented, is neither his fault nor that of his friends. It has not yet been carried into complete effect, at least, to such a degree as its author intended, and as could be wished. With this, however, we have nothing to do. It is sufficient that Jesus intended it should be;—that this was the object which he had in view. Let us now see whether any mind in the age before him, ever conceived of a similar plan; whether any benefactor of the human race, any great genius of antiquity, was ever capable of such exaltation, such extension of thought.

PART SECOND.

NO GREAT MAN OF ANTIQUITY BEFORE JESUS, EVER
DEvised A BENEVOLENT PLAN FOR THE WHOLE
HUMAN FAMILY.

§ 56. **THESE** are those who can look down upon the most celebrated spirits of antiquity with a contemptuous glance because they were heathen, that is, had not that religious knowledge with which God has honored us ;—can find satisfaction in impugning their motives, or consider it as an act of piety to deny them the possession of any good disposition and feeling, and, by an unmerciful decision, declare their actions splendid sins, how fine soever and noble they may have been, and how much soever they contributed to promote the education and welfare of mankind. Such will dislike this part, perhaps pass over it, and refuse to accompany us into antiquity. We shall not allow ourselves to be disturbed or interrupted by them, while we stand with veneration before a great man of the anterior world, and admire his virtue, zeal, and superiority, and our heart flows forth with gratitude to the author and careful guardian of all, for his gifts to our world in general, but especially in these active, benevolent, and exalted spirits, in whatever climate they lived.* Let us be just. Let us honor, ad-

* "Thy foot," says Clemens of Alexandria, as it is there expressed, "will not stumble, if thou ascribest every thing good and noble, to Providence, whether it takes place among the Greeks or our-

mire, and esteem the benefactors of mankind, who lived before Jesus, according to their merits. When, under the guidance of truth, we have gone through with this worthy collection, contemplated their deeds, and developed their plans with their benevolent results, how astonished shall we be at the dignity and exaltation of him who is so much superior to them all ! With what emotion and reverence shall we at last humble ourselves before the author of Christianity, when convinced that he very far surpasses every thing that is great and exalted among men !

§ 57. Before entering upon the consideration of these benefactors of mankind, however, as individuals, let us throw out some general remarks respecting the whole of antiquity. He who is acquainted with the old world, and has been accustomed to contemplate human nature and its laws of development and operation, with a penetrating eye, will at the very outset admit it to be improbable, that, among all the great men with which antiquity abounds, we shall light upon any, who were capable of such enlargement of thought, such extensive goodness of heart, as shine forth from the plan of Jesus which we have already described. Reflect upon the following circumstances:

All the nations of antiquity, even when cultivated by the arts and sciences, exhibited a certain savageness and insensibility, a certain rudeness of character, especially towards foreign nations and strangers. They were very destitute of that humanity, tender sympathy, and hearty benevolence, which ought to pervade every heart, bring mankind together, and lead them mutually to assist each other, and exert themselves in advancing each others improvement and happiness. How much soever they differed in regard to manners and customs, knowledge, civil

selves, for God is every where the author of all that is good. Some things indeed, originate immediately with him, as the Scriptures of the Old and N. Test., others again mediately, as philosophy. And even this, he appears to have imparted immediately to the Greeks, until they were called by the Lord ; for philosophy led the Greeks to Christ, as the law did the Jews." Vid. Strom., lib. I. p. 331, Potter's ed. [Sylburg's, p. 282. Comp. Neander's K. G., I. 3. 919 ff.]

regulations and religion, they all evinced more or less of this hostile insensibility, this inclination to cruelty, this dislike of repose, and the gentle arts of peace. Very striking and terrific, however, does this trait appear in the mode of thinking peculiar to those who excited great attention, and effected great revolutions. The causes of this phenomenon can easily be pointed out.

With those nations, which seldom or never arose from a state of barbarity, such as pastoral tribes, and those that subsisted entirely by hunting and fishing, it was almost necessarily the result of their mode of life. In such a state, man needs but little penetration or corporeal skill. He is put in motion and driven to action, solely by the mechanical power of his own animal desires, and the impetuosity of his wants, and as soon as they are satisfied, he sinks down into a state of listlessness and stupidity, in which he is altogether indifferent to the fate of his fellow creatures. In whatever he does, he is influenced chiefly, if not entirely by the base motives of selfishness. As, moreover, the relations he sustains are few, very lax, and seldom awaken or cherish in his bosom any thing like friendly sympathy and careful zeal for strangers, so the important idea of a common and public weal, is never developed or awakened in his soul. For this very reason, he will never think of extending his benefits farther than to those nearly allied to him by nature, or at most, to the tribe to which he belongs. In this state therefore, man is a kind of ravenous beast, full of insensibility and cruelty, towards every one with whom he is not particularly acquainted, or from whom he is in any measure afraid of receiving injury. This was the state of far the greatest part of the human race, before the time of Christ.

Not much better was the condition of those who lived in bad civil governments, restless democracies, tyrannical oligarchies, or under despots. The entire history of such nations is usually made up of violent changes, and internal discords and commotions, accompanied with the shedding of human blood. In the course of half a century, they often experienced revolutions, which cost them the lives of a great part of their best citizens. Almost daily were they

called upon to witness examples of cruelty and oppression among themselves, and were thrown by party spirit into relations and embroiled in contentions, which suffocated all that true, mutual confidence, which the citizens of a state ought to feel towards each other, or rendered a cautious mistrust, a kind of indispensable wisdom. In particular, they lived in circumstances, in which the causes adapted to quicken the sensibilities, and originate that disinterested goodness, which expands the heart with benevolence, were either altogether wanting, or not in sufficient operation. How would it have been possible, then, for the character of such nations, not to acquire a degree of insensibility, a kind of inclination for violent deeds, and a marked indifference to human life? The religion of such nations is always as rude, savage, and cruel, as themselves. Accustomed as they are to tumults and bloodshed, the sciences, even if they flourish, never produce a very powerful effect upon their hearts, and at most, only soften here and there a feeling soul, that lives in retirement, and is unnoticed by the crowd. Riches and wealth are employed in a manner agreeable to the prevailing taste. Such nations are rude and cruel in their very amusements, and can look upon the shedding of human blood in theatres, as a diverting spectacle.

Such, then, being the condition of a large portion of the nations of antiquity, even the most celebrated, it is no wonder that the enlightened Greek, notwithstanding the soft sensibilities which he had received from nature, even when his native country was distinguished for cultivating the arts and sciences, and filled with immortal works, was so warlike, so fond of noisy commotions, and so indifferent to human blood.

§ 58. To all this, may be added the desire of conquests, and the few interests which the old nations had in common, for binding each other together.* It is true, that commerce had, at a very early age, established intercourse between the most remote countries, and brought their inhab-

* Comp. Polybius' Hist., l. I. c. 3.

itants in contact with each other.* Those nations of the old world, however, which were the most noted for commerce, under the influence of selfishness, sought not only to enhance the value of their own markets, by usually laying obstacles in the way of free intercourse, but, whenever their own interests required, indulged in every kind of violence, and, in opposition to the laws of freedom, entered into treaties with each other for carrying on piracy.† Besides, nearly all the great nations of antiquity evinced a restless barbarity, which induced them to go out as adventurers in predatory bands, and make attempts to conquer their neighbours, and perhaps, subdue the world. Even small, insignificant clans were engaged in constant warfare with each other, and usually indulged in mutual hostilities, until swallowed by some superior power.‡ Among the rude nations of remote antiquity, it was at all times considered not only as lawful, but honorable, to engage in warlike excursions into foreign countries, and make unexpected sallies and hostile landings, for the purpose of taking prisoners, acquiring plunder, and perpetrating cruelties. The bands of robbers who did such things always had the public consent, and sometimes a hero for their guide.§ The great

* Heeren's excellent work : *Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr, und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der alten Welt*, 2 Thle. 8; [first ed., 1793—96; in the fourth, to the present time, 6 Bde., 1824—26, or the *Historische Schriften von H., Theil 10—15.*] [N. B. This is the same work, of a part of which, Mr. Bancroft has given a translation, entitled, *Reflections on the Politics of Ancient Greece*. Tr.]

† For such a treaty between the Carthagenians and Romans, vid. Polybius' *Hist.*, l. III. c. 24, p. 433, Schweighäus. ed., and Heeren's *Ideen*, Th. I. S. 125. [4th ed., Th. II. Abth. 1. S. 168, and Beilage, S. 503 ff., *Histor. Schriften*, Theil 13.]

‡ What most men call peace, Plato, in his work *concerning laws*, lib. I. S. 7. Bip. ed. [Tom. VIII.,] makes *Clinias*, his *Cretensian friend*, pronounce but an empty name; as also, that most states are by nature constantly involved in war with each other, though it is not publicly declared to be such. That this is the general principle upon which the nations of antiquity acted, is evident from the whole course of history.

§ The sacred Scriptures are known to contain examples of this custom. *Comp. Michaelis*, *Mosaisches Recht*, Th. I. § 40. S. 247, [Smith's transl., *Commentaries on the law of Moses*, Vol. I. Art. 40,

migrations those nations had to pass through, which went out in search of dwelling places, and, while on their way, carried on hostilities with those they met, or drove them before them, and compelled them to make similar changes, kept up the constant alternation of offensive and defensive wars, in which almost all the nations of antiquity were engaged. So long as a state maintained no standing army, each citizen was obliged to defend his native country for himself, and do it under the circumstances which I have just described, and the legislature had to see that every individual capable of bearing arms, was trained for war. No system of government having been invented for keeping up the balance of power, and confining states within the bounds of moderation; justice, mild manners, and hearty and universal benevolence, both in regard to nations and individuals, found too hard a soil and unfavorable a sky, to flourish. On the other hand, a rough, military spirit every where predominated, and exhibited itself in institutions and ceremonies, laws, manners, and amusements, and nations were obliged to maintain a constant distance and reserve in regard to each other, treat each other as strangers, and in a measure as enemies.*

I have no fears that any person acquainted with anti-

p. 218 seqq., Lond. 1814. TR.] Homer too speaks of it more than once; for example, *Odyss.* l. III. v. 73, at which place Clark's note is to be consulted. Thucydides has judged very correctly upon the subject in his history, B. I. Chap. V. and VI. His account proves that Greece, as cultivated as she *then* was, contained nations that looked upon the bravery of robbers with commendation, and fearlessly practised it. Altogether in the spirit of so rough an age, is the description given by Caesar of the ancient Germans, in reference to this custom. "*Latrocinia*," says he, "*nullam habent infamiam, quae extra fines cuiusque ciuitatis fiunt. Atque ea iuuentutis exercendae, ac desidia minvendae causa fieri, praedicant. Atque ubi quis ex principibus in consilio se dixit ducem fore, ut, qui sequi velint, profiteantur; consurgunt ii, qui et causam et hominem probant, sumque auxilium pollicentur, atque ab multitudine callaudantur: qui ex iis secuti non sunt, in desertorum ac proditorum numero ducuntur, omniumque rerum iis postea fides abrogatur.*" *De Bel. Gall.* 2. V. c. 23.

* Maximus of Tyre has given a description of this evident deficiency of philanthropy throughout the whole of antiquity, in his 36th [in Reiske the 6th] declamation. His complaints are too substantially grounded upon facts, to admit of our supposing them to be the result of mere rhetorical phraseology.

quity, will think this painting unjust. The traits of which it is composed, lie so obviously on the face of history, that one needs only to collect them together, in order to discover the origin of this picture. Let a man only call to mind the severity of the laws of war among the ancients, and the hard bondage to which a great portion of the human race were subjected, and he will be immediately led to the supposition, that all the nations of the old world were more or less deficient in humanity and sensibility, and had but little esteem for human nature. This being admitted, from it we may naturally draw the following conclusions.

§ 59. *First.* It is much to be feared that we shall meet with few great spirits in antiquity, who extended their views beyond their own people and embraced other nations in their plans of benevolence. Such enlargement of thought was doubtless a rare phenomenon. The very circumstances of the age absolutely confined men of powerful talents to their own native country, and compelled them to look upon all other nations as strangers, with whom they had nothing to do. He, who had boldly defended the society to which he belonged, given it laws, and governed it in wisdom, and thus been the means of forming its character, was thought to have attained the highest degree of honor and renown; and he who engaged in any very extensive projects, perceived obstacles in his way, which could be removed only by the force of arms. How then was it possible for that greatness of mind to develop itself, which comprehends many nations, and takes the whole human family in its grasp?

§ 60. *Secondly.* If we happen to discover such greatness, it will assuredly be made up of that enterprising, warlike spirit, so universally revered by the ancients; if we ever meet with a man of bold enlargement of thought, we shall find in him a conqueror. Who does not know how much this remark is confirmed by history? Ninus, Sesostris, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus,* Alexander, Demetri-

* [In the author's Latin commentation, *Opuscul. Academ.*, I. 247, he remarks respecting Cyrus: *Quae Xenophon de Cyro reliquit, ea,*

us the besieger, Pyrrhus, and others, are unquestionable examples. These spirits were indeed too great to be confined within the narrow limits of the districts of which they were the rightful lords. The compass of their plan, however, agreeably to the prevailing taste, which considered boldness and military greatness, as something which deserved the most admiration, and opened for the hero a way to heaven and the rank of the gods, must have excited in them the desire of subduing all nations, while they filled the world with misery and desolation. The enlargement of thought, therefore, which they possessed, was so different from that which we now have in view, as to render it unnecessary for us to speak of it in detail.* Like

ut cum Cicerone [ad Quint. Fratr. I. 1. § 8.] loquar, non ad historiae veritatem, sed ad institutionis exemplum scripta sunt. Cf. Diog. Laert. I. III. segm. 34, et Menægius ad h. l. Concerning Caesar, cf. quæ de animo Caesaris disputat, veterum auctoritatibus usus, Berger, in libro aureo, de naturali pulcritudine orationis, p. 84 seqq. Verissimum est Ferguson's de hoc viro iudicium: "The object of Caesar's wishes was not to be great or good, but to be the first, and the first in respect to those things which attract the admiration of the multitude;—the first in a village, rather than the second at Rome." Comp. Grundsätze der Moralphilosophie übers. v. Garve, Abtheil. 2. kap. 3. § 2. p. 61.]

* If the opinion of some writers, both of ancient and modern times, is correct, then Alexander is to be excepted from the number of these destructive ravagers of the world. They impute to this really wonderful man, a plan of the most benevolent character, and assert, that he intended to impart Grecian cultivation to the whole human family, found a confederacy of all nations, and, by the erection of a universal monarchy, make security, affluence, and happiness, universal. Vid. Plutarch, De fortuna vel virtute Alexandri, Orat. I. p. 311, Reisk. ed. [Vol. VII.,] and an anonymous writer, to whom Arrian appeals, De Exped. Alex. M., l. VII. from the beginning; also Robertson's Hist. of Amer., Vol. I. p. 16 seqq.; and his Historical Disquisition concerning the knowledge which the ancients had of India, p. 12 seqq., Lond. and Ed., 1818. That Alexander connected many benevolent purposes with his ambitious plans, we may be assured from the goodness of his natural disposition, the rational education he received, and his having constantly associated with philosophers and wise men. That the ultimate goal of his enterprises, however, was a benevolent plan, no one will believe, who takes into impartial consideration, his fool-hardy conduct, and especially the vices and cruelties of which he was guilty, in the latter part of his life. Arrian makes a very correct remark to this effect, in the passage quoted.

a hurricane, it caused mankind to tremble, but it did not render them happy. We should be ungrateful indeed not to admit that Providence educed good out of these evils, and in the end made them promotive of the general welfare of mankind. This circumstance, however, has nothing to do with the present subject. We are now in search of those, who, under the guidance of wisdom, and in conformity with their own resolutions, became the immediate benefactors of the human race,* and to this worthy class they certainly do not belong.

Such then being the state of things and the mode of thinking among the ancients, it is, in the *third* place, highly probable, that we shall not find a man among them, who was capable of that extension of thought, that expansive goodness, that tender benevolence, from which originated the plan of Jesus that we have already described. What can justify us in hoping to make such an agreeable discovery, since, circumstances being as they were, it is impossible to see by what causes such a spirit could have been produced? Dispositions, feelings, and plans of such a benevolent character, were by no means agreeable to the taste which prevailed in the old military world, and therefore in all probability not to be met with in it. For the honor of humanity, we should hope to light upon men among the ancients, who, to a certain extent, possessed these dispositions and feelings, and, under the influence of genuine benevolence, became the creators, defenders, teachers, and fathers of the nations to which they belonged. If so, however, we shall doubtless always find them very limited and cautious in their undertakings, in comparison with what is to be expected from such a comprehensive spirit of benevolence as that which we discovered in our examination of Christ's plan.† From this general con-

* [In the Latin commentation, S. 247, reference is farther made to Seneca, De Benefice, l. I. c. 13, and Thomas Abbt, Vom Verdienste, S. 216 ff.]

† "Human excellence," says Maximus, in the discourse quoted, "is not only far inferior to divine in general, but particularly in reference to *extensive benevolence*. No human being in this respect embraces

sideration, therefore, there is much reason even now to believe, that Jesus stands alone and without example, on an elevation which none before him ever attempted to reach.

§ 61. There is another circumstance, however, which belongs to this place, and must strengthen us in this conjecture. The very character of the religions of antiquity appears to have been extremely prejudicial to that public spirit, that expansive benevolence, from which originated the plan of the Author of Christianity, and to have suppressed it in the greatest minds. Reflect upon the following circumstances.

It cannot be denied that the ancients, in general, agreed to a certain extent in contemplating the Deity, of whom they had a great variety of representations, such as images and pictures, in a terrific point of view, and considered him more as a being before whose anger they were to tremble, than as a benefactor and father, worthy of the utmost confidence and love. That this was almost always the case with rude nations, we know full well, and a great part of the anterior world was very rude.* Unquestionable traces of this mode of thinking are exhibited in the languages of the ancients, for most of the names which they appropriated to the Deity are significant of his almightiness, independence, and unlimited, incontrollable will, and, in reference to it, imply, that nothing remains for the weak creature of the dust but submission. So much do their religious notions hang upon these representations, that many have considered it as a proof that their whole religion took its rise in fear, and all their conceptions of the Deity sprung from terror at the great and powerful changes that take place in nature.† Nations and

his whole race, but each one, like the beasts of a single tribe, always confines himself to his own fellow citizens; and it is a great thing, if he comprehends even these as a body. Vid. p. 368, Davis. ed. [Reisk., I. 86.] The truth of this remark is hereafter very clearly established.

* With respect to this remark, comp. Home's Sketches of the Hist. of Man, Vol. III. B. 3. Sk. 3. Chap. II. 269, ed. 1807.

† Vid. Lucretius, De Rerum Nat. l. V. 1217—1239.

individuals generally furnished the Deity with their own views, inclinations, and characters, and hence originated that almost endless variety of distinctions, at all times connected in their minds with the idea of God. Now as all the nations of the old world exhibited a certain degree of roughness, inflexibility, and inclination to cruelty and revenge, we need not be astonished if we find that their gods also possessed these qualities, were governed by unhappy passions, and could with satisfaction see their altars smoke with human blood.* So long, however, as the soul is pervaded by such opinions respecting the godhead, it is impossible for it to put forth that unlimited kindness, that heavenly desire of doing good as far as able, to all. That heart only will be warm with benevolence towards mankind without distinction, and active in promoting the general good, which looks upon God as a kind and common parent, and considers every human being as his child

* In saying this, I do not deny that many philosophers, especially Socrates, Plato, and the Stoics, had better and purer notions of the Deity, and looked upon him as a good being, exercising a wise and ceaseless care for the welfare of mankind. These notions, however, did not enter into *the religion of the people*, and so incapable were these men of reforming, or supplanting the wretched popular religion prevalent, that they combined a part of the general superstition with their best principles, and endeavored to give it a tolerable meaning. [According to Stollberg's *Reise in Italien*, II. 267, the finest ancient statues of the gods, exhibit an expression of lifelessness and want of love, which indicates that the prevailing feeling of antiquity in regard to the Deity, was fear. The passage runs thus: "Most of the heads of the old statues, whether of gods or men, males or females, are distinguished for a certain character of hardness, want of sympathy and troubled melancholy, which approaches almost to anger. If I mistake not, a conception of transitoriness and of death as a long sleep (*Ταπληγεως θανατοιο*,) produced an effect upon the imagination of the heathen artist;—an effect in different ways, according as he gave himself up to this impression or strove to harden himself against,—an effect, which was transferred by the arm and chisel of the artist, from his heart to the marble. In confirmation of this, I appeal to the feelings of every unprejudiced man, who has formed an acquaintance with the art of the ancients from copper-plates alone. Even the features of those of their gods that were clothed with immortal youth, seem to be overcast with a dark cloud, the conception of death." Comp. Rom. 8: 15, which was not true of the Jews alone; *φθονερον το θειον*, Herodot., I. c. 32. III. c. 40.]

and as a brother. It cannot be denied, however, that the founder of Christianity was the first to publish such views of God, and propagate them even among the lowest classes of society. It will be difficult, therefore, for us in antiquity, to meet with that benevolent enlargement of thought, which has a very close and intimate connexion with them.

To all these it may now be added, that every nation of antiquity had its own gods, and its own method of worshipping them, accompanied with peculiar rites and forms; that one nation considered that as holy which another detested; that one gave divine honor to a creature which another despised, or at best treated as common; that this opinion respecting national gods, necessarily created a kind of hatred between nations, as they differed from each other exactly in that point, which they looked upon as the most sacred and important;* and finally, that this hatred must have taken a firm hold of the hearts of the ignorant populace, their zeal in such cases easily degenerating into a fury that knows no bounds.† These additional circumstances being taken into view, it will be evident, as I think, that the religions of antiquity interposed insuperable obstacles in the way of that goodness which embraces all mankind. Hence, if, notwithstanding the character of the ancient world, we should be able to discover in it, a mind which was capable of that enlargement of thought, which shines forth so conspicuously in the plan of Jesus, we should be obliged to look upon it as a kind of psychological wonder.‡

§ 62. We shall, however, not confine ourselves any longer to general considerations. Let us now proceed to

* Vid. a fine passage upon this subject in Athanasius, *Contra Gentes*, p. 25, 26.

† The ancient history of the Egyptians furnishes us with examples. The murder of a sacred, old cat, whether done intentionally or not, would excite the populace to a degree of rage, which could be allayed only by shedding the blood of him who committed the deed. [Diodor. Sicul., I. c. 83, Bip., p. 246.]

‡ Comp. Iselin, *Geschichte der Menschheit*, B. IV. Kap. X. XI. S. 421 ff.

an examination of those benefactors of the human race which made their appearance before the author of Christianity, and, from a survey of their enterprises and plans, endeavor to ascertain whether history furnishes us with any, who exhibited such greatness and benevolence in their thoughts and actions, as Jesus.

The men, as I think, whom we are to look upon as the benefactors of mankind, and among whom we must search for great plans for the good of the world, are the founders of states, and legislators; defenders of their native country, and benevolent heroes; wise kings, and statesmen; philosophers, teachers of the human race, and the founders of religions. We shall make some particular remarks respecting each of these classes.

FOUNDERS OF STATES, AND LEGISLATORS.

§ 62. It is not an easy thing to create a nation by collecting together a mass of wild, uncultivated people, binding them together with salutary laws, and animating them with the spirit of order and mutual good will; or to reunite the severed fragments of a state, which has once fallen to ruins, and is full of internal discord, and, by means of better laws, impart to the whole new strength, harmonious efficiency, and lasting connexion. There are difficulties inseparable from such a work. He who is acquainted with them, will admire those spirits of antiquity which engaged in it, and, though they may have committed great errors, and in a measure failed in their undertakings, must acknowledge and highly prize the courage that could venture upon such important business, as well as the penetrating views which originated and arranged their plans, and the superiority and activity which carried them into execution. Now the numerous difficulties which encompass a plan of this kind, even when confined to a very small nation, entirely discourage us from expecting to find one of any greater magnitude among the founders of states,

and the legislators of antiquity. The education of their own countrymen required all their wisdom, time, and efforts. In resolving to devote themselves to this particular object, they had, as it were, renounced every plan of more general extent, and, I may say, devoted all their powers to acquiring the most accurate information of a definite subject. They were obliged to avail themselves of those measures which were called for by the circumstances of the nation to which they belonged and its relation to other nations, and were calculated to form that character which it was to sustain, and of course such as could not be adapted to other nations or mankind at large. Finally, the work in which they were engaged, forced them to descend to so many views and measures, having respect to individuals and particulars, as to disqualify them, just so far as they were faithful to their own people, from entering into the affairs of other nations. One of the most important resolutions, however, that a man can make, is to reform a whole nation, and, by means of salutary laws, render its descendants happy, to the latest generations. The plans of these men, therefore, in themselves considered, are always great, and worthy of exalted spirits. But if a plan which aims at the welfare of a single nation, when contemplated alone, appears so great, how small and insignificant must it appear, when viewed in comparison with the plan formed by Jesus for the good of all mankind !

Now such was the narrow sphere to which, according to the representations of history, all the old founders of states, and the legislators of antiquity, were confined. The beginning of most kingdoms was small and insignificant. Their first laws and regulations usually originated in chance and pressing necessity, and of course were enactments for the occasion, rather than the constituent parts of an original and well contrived plan. The time of actual legislation almost always came on at a later period, and not until people began to perceive, that the laws and observances which had arisen at different times, were very defective, had but little connexion, agreement, and dura-

bility, and, if not amended, would prove prejudicial to a part of the state or to the whole body, in proportion as it came to maturity. When, however, the period actually arrived for a more general, perfect, and systematic legislation, the ground plot marked out for the purpose, was almost always more limited than it should have been. Indeed, antiquity does not furnish us with a single legislator, who gave his country laws and regulations, which appear to have had any reference to the welfare of other nations, or been founded upon a plan, which originated in wisdom, design, and benevolence, of greater extent than we have described.

§ 63. It is true that the Romans thought they found decisive marks among the nations of heathen antiquity, indicating that they had been destined, even from those remote ages, in which their history was lost in the obscurity of fable, to become the rulers of the world. This thought is also known to have produced a powerful effect upon them, and greatly to have contributed to raise them to that degree of power and authority, to which they afterwards attained. It did not originate, however, with the founder of this nation. Romulus certainly never had the great object, the immense plan in view, of giving his rising state such regulations as should, in the sequel, enable it to swallow up all others.* This thought originated in a lie of necessity, which was first confirmed by a false oath, and afterwards maintained by superstition, by which means, however, it acquired a sufficient degree of honorable authority, to produce a permanent impression upon the rough

* Several writers, indeed, as Plutarch observes, have been inclined to attribute something of the kind, to this founder of the Roman empire. But Plutarch himself rejects the supposition as improbable, and gives a perfectly satisfactory explanation of the seizure of the Sabine women, in which Romulus engaged, and which these writers, strangely enough, would deduce from his great plan, by recurring to the condition of the city, which had then hardly begun to exist. In *Romul.* c. XIV. p. 103, Reisk. ed. [Vol. I.] [Plutarch's *Lives*, translated by Langhorne, &c., Vol. I. p. 40, Phil., 1822. Tr.] Comp. also Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquit. Rom.*, l. II. cap. 31. p. 301, Reisk. ed.

and warlike hearts of the Romans.* The first Roman legislator, the peaceful Numa, does not appear to have been very favorable to this opinion, for he evidently intended, out of his Romans, to form a quiet and happy nation.† Nor can we say that express reference was had to it, in the formation of laws in after times. Indeed, the Roman constitution was always destitute of proper stability, and so deficient as to its entire groundwork, in unity and lasting connexion, that it was necessary for it to undergo the most important changes to accommodate it to circumstances.‡ The thought, therefore, that Rome was to become the mistress of the world, does not appear to have been sustained by legislation, or to have served as a guide in the formation of laws; but, on the other hand, it often served rather to divest the constitution of its unhappy influence, by binding the people in all their difficulties with the government, in some measure, to the state.§ If we admit, however, that Rome ever had a legislator, who, in anticipation, devised the very extensive plan of giving his nation a constitution, which should prove the means of making it the first nation on the globe, even this

* To this place belong the accounts taken from Livy's *Hist.*, l. I. c. XVI. and LV., and also the remarks of Plutarch, in *Romul.*, c. XXVIII. p. 139 seq. [Plutarch's *Lives*, translated by Langhorne, &c., Vol. I. p. 57. Tr.] Speaking in this place, of the powerful effect which this well known fiction of Proculus is said to have produced, Plutarch says; "It gained credit with the Romans, who were caught with enthusiasm, as if they had actually been inspired; and, far from contradicting what they had heard, they bade adieu to all their suspicions of its authenticity, united in deifying Quirinus, and addressed their devotions to him, as a new, tutelar god of the nation." What was better calculated to fill a nation as rough and warlike as the Romans of that day were, with fiery zeal, than a miracle so flattering to their passions?

† Plutarch infers this very correctly from the regulations of this king in general, and particularly from the manner in which he favored agriculture; in Numa, c. VIII. p. 254, and c. XVI. p. 282. [Reisk. Vol. I.] [Plutarch's *Lives*, ed. as above, Vol. I. p. 118. Tr.]

‡ This is said in express terms by Polybius, that sagacious judge of the history of Rome and its constitution, in *Reliquiis lib. Hist.*, VI. p. 478. Tom. II. Schweighäus. ed.

§ Vid. Plutarch in Camill., c. XXXI. p. 561. [Reisk. Vol. I.] [Plutarch's *Lives*, &c. Vol. I. p. 227. Tr.]

would not be the plan for which we are seeking, but evidently the project of a conqueror, prejudicial to happiness and repose, and evincing more roughness and savage barbarity, than true wisdom and nobleness of spirit. Indeed, it was the idea of universal dominion, so peculiar to the Romans, which cherished in them that insatiable desire of war, which did so much mischief to the best part of the world, and could not be satisfied with torrents of human blood.*

§ 64. I dare not declare the assertion, made with such positiveness, by the author of a book respecting the happiness of nations, that all civil governments originated in violence and strength, to be perfectly correct.† Perhaps many arguments can be adduced from history in proof of the contrary. This author, however, is unquestionably correct in saying, that all the civil govern-

* This cannot be said in fewer words and a better manner, than Tacitus makes his Calgacus express it: "Raptores orbis (*Romani*) postquam cuncta vastantibus defuere terrae, et mare scrutantur; si locuples hostis est, avari; si pauper, ambitiosi; quos non Oriens, non Occidens satiauerit; soli omnium opes atque inopiam pari affectu concupiscunt. Auferre, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus *imperium*, atque vbi solitudinem faciunt, *pacem* appellant. In vita Agricol., c. 30. [Much instruction upon this subject is contained in Richter's two programmata; "Quae impedimenta offecerint sensui humanitatis in iuuenibus Romanis excitando," Guben 1803 and 1804; where it is shown, that the cultivation of humanity was hindered, not only by the warlike spirit that universally prevailed among the Romans, but also by their whole military constitution, which so often called the citizens to arms, and smothered all human feelings, as well as by the severity of paternal government, the state of slavery, and the furious combats in vogue. The desire of a triumph cherished in them a love of murder and war, and the solemnities with which one was celebrated, filled them with pride. For a long time, the arts and sciences were not cultivated at all, and even at a later date, they were really esteemed and zealously attended to but by a few, and hence they could never produce their entire, legitimate effect. The Romans had such an exalted opinion of their own worth, that they despised all other nations, and treated them with contempt; and even their religion was calculated to foster arrogance and propagate rudeness of manners.]

† De la Félicité publique ou Considerations sur le sort des Hommes dans les différentes Epoque de l'Histoire, Tom. I. p. 6.

ments of antiquity, the Israelitish alone excepted, were modelled chiefly with reference to offensive and defensive war, and that legislators, as a body, were at particular pains to cherish a certain warlike spirit among their countrymen, and inspire them with dispositions and feelings, rather hostile towards other nations, than benevolent. Their attempts to soften the rough wildness of their fellow citizens, and excite in them sociable and humane inclinations, had no immediate reference to strangers, but were merely intended to prevent those gross outbursts of cruelty, which would necessarily prove destructive to order and harmony, if suffered to exist in the bosom of society. Most legislators were obliged to content themselves, if they accomplished even this limited object, and succeeded in instilling into the rude multitudes, which they sought to tame, any love to the common good, any forbearance towards those with whom they were immediately connected.* Few went so far as to think of what they owed to strangers. Very many, on the other hand, labored to keep such duties out of the view of their fellow creatures;—a fact which shines forth with such clearness from some of their civil constitutions, as to fill us with aversion and horror, at the indifference which these legislators must have felt to other nations, and to human blood. Of this, the Lacedemonians present us with a notable example. One cannot indeed refrain from admiring the penetrating mind of the legislator, who could devise and execute a plan, which would certainly have been declared chimerical, had it not been followed in Sparta.† It is easy to perceive, however, that his system of laws, though it has often been admired, exhibits but little goodness of

* Comp. Heyne's treatise, entitled, "*Delibantur nonnulla in vitæ humanæ initiis a primis Græciæ legumlatoribus ad morum mansuetudinem sapienter instituta*," in the *Opusc. Academ.*, Tom. I. p. 207 seqq., which, notwithstanding its great brevity, contains matter enough for more extensive contemplations upon this subject.

* Vid. Plutarch in *Lycurg.*, c. XXXI. p. 233, [Reisk. Vol. I.] [Plutarch's lives &c. Vol. I. p. 97. Tr.]

heart, little humanity and benevolence.* Now this lack of humanity, this inclination to oppression and violence, was absolutely favored and justified to a greater or less degree, by all the ancient constitutions, so far as we are acquainted with them. Even that of the Egyptians, which was the most peaceful of them all, inculcated upon its citizens a

* The ancients themselves have said much upon this subject that is correct. Vid. Isocrates here and there, especially in his *Panathenæon*; also the well known funeral discourse of Pericles in Thucydides, l. II. c. 37 ff. Later writers have exhibited this in a still clearer light; for example, the author of the work just named, *Sur la Félicité publique*, Tom. I. p. 59 ss., and Abbt's *Letters upon modern literature*, Th. XXII. S. 93 ff. De Pauw, in his *Recherches philosophiques sur les Grecs*, Tom. II. part IV. p. 231 ss., has, unquestionably, exaggerated the matter; to him, therefore, I will not presume to appeal. [Nast has shown, in a very convincing manner, in his treatise upon the excellencies and the defects of the Lycurgian legislation and state constitution, *Kleine akadem. Geleg. Schriften*, I. nr. 5, Tüb., 1820, how completely they were modelled with reference exclusively to the virtue of Sparta and her citizens, and how much the object which Lycurgus had in view, when compared with that of humanity, deserves our most hearty disapprobation. According to Zoëga, *Ueber Lykurg und die Sparter*, (Abhandlungen, herausg. v. Welcker, Gött. 1817, S. 316—324,) a more unhappy people than the Laconians were, could hardly be found. Their constitution was calculated to advance the welfare of a few, at the misery and expense of the multitude. Manso in his classical work, *Sparta, Ein Versuch zur Aufklärung der Geschichte und Verfassung dieses Staates*, B. 3. Th. 1. at the end, L. 1800—1805, thus concludes his investigations: "As to his worth, in relation to the world and to humanity, there can be no doubt. Not a flower sprung up in Laconian soil, that acquired healthful strength or fragrant growth, and neither the gladdening voice of the poet has come down to us from thence, nor have the obscurities of nature and the depths of the human mind, received new light from the investigations of any of its wise men; but the nation itself stands before us as an instructive and warning example, and as such speaks in an audible voice. It has solved a problem not so unnatural as not at least to have been once taken up, put into practice, and brought to a result, in a manner which clearly shows what part of it lies within the limits of attainableness, and how far it can be performed. As often as the historian and philosopher speak of heroic virtues and the means of advancing them, they will make mention of this Spartan, and the influence of his legislation. Whenever they glance at the higher objects to which man is to attain, and the harmonious development and formation of all the faculties in his possession, they will think with admiration upon the man, who even sacrificed himself for the state, but they will hardly dwell upon him with love."]

certain dislike and contempt of strangers, altogether inconsistent with the laws of philanthropy. But what is the result of these remarks? Unquestionably this; that Numa, Solon, Lycurgus, and Pythagoras, whose school produced so many wise legislators and statesmen, as well as many other great men of antiquity, did indeed possess minds of extraordinary capacities, and deserve to be reckoned among the benefactors of mankind, for having in some measure civilized their countrymen, and delivered them from a terrible state of anarchy and barbarity; but that among them all, we do not find one who devised a plan of such dignity, useful qualities, and extent, as we have already discovered in that of Jesus. It appears not to have been agreeable to the taste of the greatest legislators of antiquity, to awaken and cherish benevolent and philanthropical dispositions and feelings among their fellow citizens, towards those who lived without the borders of their own native country. With all their greatness in other respects, in this, they were narrow hearted, contracted, and selfish.

HEROES AND DEFENDERS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

§ 65. We now proceed to that class which consists of heroes and defenders of their native country. I have already remarked, that I do not here speak of those conquerors and disturbers of human happiness and repose, who carried on war, in order to satisfy a wild ambition, which, like a kind of delirium, excited them to engage in monstrous enterprises. I here refer solely to those benevolent heroes of antiquity, who magnanimously defended their native countries, and nobly avenged the cause of oppressed innocence. They were undoubtedly men of extraordinary faculties, and accustomed to forming and executing plans of importance. How much soever the manner in which they labored to promote the welfare of their fellow creatures, appears to have differed from that of

Jesus, they must not be entirely passed over, for the object of our inquiry is a philanthropical extension of thought. We are here in quest of a man, who was animated with a noble zeal in behalf of the dignity and happiness of his fellow creatures, and engaged in the execution of a plan for the good of all without exception. Why, from the investigation, should those in particular be excluded, who ventured their lives and shed their blood, for the sake of others?

Fabulous accounts do indeed name some heroes of this kind, who are said to have employed their courage and strength in delivering mankind from wild animals and monsters, and imparting to them useful knowledge. Of the two most noted of them, I shall say all that is necessary, a little farther on. At present I confine myself solely to authentic history; and even this, certainly presents us with a multitude of men who have deserved well of the world for their deeds. It tells us of those who defended their native country and their allies against unjust attacks, aroused by the strength of their minds, and sustained, the sinking courage of their terrified fellow citizens in times of danger, generously and bravely ventured their lives for the public good, and, amidst the perils and cruelties of war, set examples of philanthropy, courage and forbearance. Who will not here immediately call to mind the great names of Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon, Leonidas, Agesilaus, Epaminondas, Phocion, Philopœmen, among the Greeks; and those of Brutus, Fabricius, Camillus, Marcellus, Æmillius, and the Scipios, among the Romans; as well as numerous other heroes, to whom their native country was indebted for its freedom and prosperity?

That various objections may be made to much that was said and done by these men, as well as to many of the dispositions and feelings in which they indulged, many principles by which they were governed, and many parts of their mode of thinking as a whole, I readily admit. It cannot be denied, however painful the fact, that, on numerous occasions, their characters exhibited traits of that unfriendly severity and hardness, so peculiar to all anti-

quity. Who, however, that takes into consideration the circumstances in which they were called upon to serve their native country, will not allow them after all, to have been its greatest benefactors? During that age, a general mistrust prevailed, and almost every nation was obliged to be as it were, constantly under arms; for a peaceful man before he was aware of it, might be attacked by a tyrannical neighbour and deprived of all his tranquillity, and of course, power was considered in a great measure as authorizing what was right, and the strongest were permitted to take possession of all things. Hence, no nation that was destitute of men of such courage and decision, could possibly feel itself safe, or enjoy any degree of lasting prosperity. Those therefore, who rescued their respective countries from those attacks, merely, which were unjust, and defended them against wrongs from other nations, while they gave their fellow citizens instructive and animating examples of industry, order, magnanimity, moderation, and manly self-control, ought to be reckoned among the most distinguished benefactors of the human race; for we may safely say, that by their example, activity, and authority, they prevented the outbreaks of a thousand base and pernicious desires, smothered a thousand disorders in the bud, formed a thousand youth, whose fiery spirits would have led them on to extravagancies, into orderly and useful citizens, and made mankind to some degree acquainted with a lawful mode of thinking, as well as with a justice and magnanimity, which must have been the origin of innumerable deeds of public utility. Now if every thing that is good and useful, in whatever it consist, is to be esteemed and praised as such, why should we not recognise with satisfaction the contributions of these men to the amount of good dispositions and actions, and bless those, who, in this way, rendered themselves useful to mankind?

§ 66. I need, however, scarcely add the remark, that, notwithstanding the attention which these men have always attracted, and the high esteem in which they deserve to be held by us, none of them can ever have thought of

such an extensive and benevolent plan as that of which we are now in pursuit. They were confined to their native countries, and in their spheres, did uncommonly well. The manner in which they sought to do good, however, rendered it necessary for them to do as much injury as possible to other nations for the security of their own. They were obliged to adopt rules of action, severe, and often repulsive to their own feelings. The warlike character of the age necessarily cherished in them a spirit of mistrust towards all their neighbours, and prevented them from forming philanthropical plans for the benefit of strangers, the welfare and prosperity of such persons, tending rather to excite their ambition and lead them on in more careful endeavors for promoting the welfare of their own countrymen. Living and acting under such circumstances as these, the formation of a salutary plan, which embraced all nations, was an absolute impossibility.

WISE KINGS AND STATESMEN.

§ 67. This is also true of those wise kings and statesmen who became the fathers of their native country, and, by attending faithfully to the performance of their business, favoring the sciences, introducing useful arts, and by various other benevolent means, advanced the happiness of thousands. In this class of men, we unquestionably find goodness of heart combined with wisdom, and an intellect, comprehensive and penetrating ;—an intellect capable of forming great plans and executing them, and doing every thing with a silent and energetic moderation, which aims at utility, and not at dazzling splendor. The men of this class, therefore, approximated very near to that greatness, of which we are seeking to find an example, except that they performed upon a small scale, what the founder of Christianity undertook to execute in his way, upon a large one. They sought to become the benefactors of a small native city or country ; he intended to become the benefactor of the world.

The warlike spirit of antiquity of which I have already spoken, made almost all the men of the old world, who felt strong enough, desirous of undertaking something important, and distinguishing themselves by heroic deeds. It is very easy, therefore, to find a great number of conquerors and excellent commanders in ancient history; while, on the other hand, one finds himself involved in a kind of embarrassment, if he attempts to name men and princes, who thought solely of benevolent plans, and endeavored to advance the welfare and moral cultivation of the multitude over which they were placed, by procuring a lasting peace for their nation, and introducing into it those wise regulations which originate in genuine philanthropy and goodness of heart. Respecting many of these benevolent friends of mankind, history is almost entirely silent, as, in the opinion of the ancients, they did nothing worthy of notice, that is, carried on no bloody wars, and wasted no countries. Of the peaceful kings, who ruled in the happiest manner over the Albanian kingdom for more than 400 years before the building of Rome, scarcely the names have come down to us. Had not Theseus and Cyrus been as great in war, as they were wise and good in peace, we should perhaps have known little of them but their names.

§ 68. In the mean time, however, those great and benevolent men, whom we do meet with in the history of antiquity, always confined their operations to the narrow circle of their own nation and country. By means of laws and religion, the wise and peaceful Numa softened the wildness of his barbarous Romans, and contented himself with making his own little state as happy as it was then in his power.* Aristides by the strictest integrity performed important services for his native country, and satisfied himself with procuring for it the confidence of all Greece, and managing its weightiest affairs with unbribed faithful-

* Comp. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitat. Rom.* l. II. c. 76. p. 400 seqq. Reisk. ed.

ness and forbearance.* Timoleon threw away his arms, as soon as his bravery had set Sicily at liberty, and, with incredible activity and goodness of heart, labored to restore this island to its ancient prosperity and repose, and finally congratulated himself with being able to end his days as a private citizen in the midst of a people whom he had made free and happy. "I thank God," he used to say, "for resolving to perform the great work of making Sicily free and happy, under my name."† From examples of this kind we see, that, amidst the bustle of armies, antiquity had wise kings and statesmen, who sought their honor in projecting salutary plans, and in the great business of rendering whole nations happy, by means of a mild and peaceful government. Every philanthropist must look upon such men with admiration and reverence, and bless their memory. They never claimed the honor, however, of comprehending nations and strangers in their plans of benevolence, and, therefore, we shall do them no injustice in admitting, that they do not evince that extensive and universal benevolence, by which, the author of Christianity was impelled, when he thought of salutary enterprises for the good of the human race.

§ 69. Before leaving this class, however, I must speak of two men, to whom fable imputes the formation of almost such a plan as that which I am endeavoring to find, and whose views of benevolence were more comprehensive than any that have hitherto been met with in the great spirits of the old world. I refer to Osiris and Hercules; of each of whom, I shall say something, beginning with the last, without regard to the order of time, which is here of no consequence.

* Socrates in Plato, speaks of the benevolent mode of thinking peculiar to this excellent man as a rare quality, and one, for which distinguished rewards are laid up in another and better world. In *Gorgia*, p. 170, Bip. ed. [Tom. IV.]

† Comp. the fine observations with which Plutarch concludes his biography of this philanthropical hero and statesman, Chap. XXXVI. p. 233 seqq. [Reisk. Vol. II.] [Plutarch's *Lives*, &c. Vol. I. p. 422 seqq. Tr.]

It is well known that in Hercules, antiquity honored a man, who employed all his time and powers in the defence and for the good of others. Wherever he went, he embraced every opportunity that presented, for benefitting his fellow creatures without respect to any particular nation. The oppressed, whoever they were, always shared his kindness and generous aid. True, the feats by which he attached others to himself, consisted for the most part in killing monsters and delivering men from the ravages and attacks of wild beasts. In the very ancient times, however, in which he is said to have lived, the earth exhibited only here and there a cultivated place, and was in general a frightful wilderness which nourished wild beasts in abundance. The hero, therefore, who had courage enough to defend mankind against these monsters, or against bloodthirsty robbers, and inhuman oppressors, ought unquestionably to be considered as a great benefactor of his race. The value and importance of actions of general utility, is doubtless to be estimated according to the circumstances and necessities of the age in which they are performed. An action, therefore, which would now be considered of a very ordinary kind, in the times of Hercules, when the means of extirpating or subduing wild beasts, and securing one's self against the violent attacks of robbers, were few, would have been looked upon as one of the greatest magnitude. Now, if we consider the noble-minded willingness, with which Hercules always hastened away for the protection of oppressed humanity, we shall find it impossible to refrain from admiring the inclination that he evinced for doing good upon a comprehensive and extensive scale, exceeding as it does, every thing of the kind that we have hitherto been able to discover from history in any great man of antiquity.*

* Hercules nihil sibi vicit : orbem terrarum transiit non concupiscendo, sed vindicando. Quid vinceret malorum hostis, bonorum vindex, terrarum marisque pacator? Seneca, De Benef. l. I. c. 13, and in particular, compare the important passage, found in Dionysius, Antiq. Rom. l. I. c. 41. [Hercules ira Junonis ad delenda monstra invitatus fere impellitur ; the author's Opusc. Ac. I. 245.]

It is certain, however, from the fable itself, that Hercules never extended his views to all. Indeed, the kind of benevolent actions which he performed, rendered this impossible. Besides, the representation that has been given of this benefactor of the human race, is unquestionably nothing more than a picture made up of several heroes of this class, and very considerably embellished. In those times men were every where needed, and almost every where to be found, who, by the strength of their arm, could afford protection from ravenous beasts of prey. In the course of time, however, the benevolent exploits of several of these heroes were collected together, and attributed to one, who was extolled as a philanthropist. In this way a fable was made, with which very naturally originated an instance of that enlargement of thought in regard to benevolent views, which no one individual of those, who, in this rough and barbarous age, contributed by their merits, to the formation of this picture, ever actually possessed or could possess.* The Sophists labored the most to render the character of this hero uncommonly great, for they delighted in making choice of his praise as the theme of their declamations, which were delivered with all the wit and eloquence of which they were masters. What wonder then that the most beautiful features of magnanimity, disinterestedness, and philanthropy, were gradually blended together in the same picture, when no one ever intended to produce it, without adding some new strokes of embellishment!†

The fable respecting Osiris and his march through the world, appears to have originated in a manner somewhat different. It unquestionably exhibits the germ of the

* Consult a passage in Cicero upon this subject, *De Natura Deorum*, B. III. Chap. 16.

† A fine specimen of such school declamations respecting the praise due to Hercules, is to be found in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertations* 5th and 22d, [two short passages. In Reiske, the 21st and 38th, Tom. I. 409, II. 235.] If any one, however, is anxious to know what the ancient grammarians made out of the mythologies respecting Hercules, he may consult what Heraclides has said upon the subject, *Allegor. Homer.*, c. 33, 34.

greatest and most salutary plan of which we find any traces before the times of the founder of Christianity. The account is given by Diodorus of Sicily.* From it we learn, that Osiris king of Egypt, after having by means of religion and agriculture, of which he and his queen were the inventors, in connexion with laws and the advancement of the sciences, softened and polished the manners of his own countrymen, formed the great design of delivering the world itself from the barbarity in which it was sunk, by travelling through it, and teaching its nations agriculture and the cultivation of the vine. His intention in this respect is said to have originated in benevolence and a desire of doing something to render himself famous. He collected together an army, not for the purpose of shedding blood, but of filling the world with pleasure and joy, and, by the enchanting effects of music and dancing, making its barbarous inhabitants willing to receive the instructions which he wished to impart. Accordingly, he confided his kingdom to safe hands during his absence, and commenced his journey. He passed through Ethiopia, Arabia, India, and the whole of Asia, and then crossed over the Hellespont into Europe, and passed through Thrace, all Greece, and the other countries that contained human beings. Wherever he went, he introduced agriculture, and on departing, left behind him memorials of his philanthropical disposition and feeling, and such of his army as were found prepared to remain with his new pupils, for the purpose of preserving and farther extending the knowledge with which they had been intrusted. He never made use of power, except when men were barbarous enough to attack and oppose him in the first place. He finally returned to his native country, accompanied with the thanks and well wishes of mankind, who ever after felt themselves bound to honor him as a benevolent deity.

I need not call the attention of any person to the greatness of this plan. Considering the circumstances under

* In his *Biblioth. Hist.*, B. I. Chap. 17—26, p. 20 seqq., Wesseling's ed.

which Osiris is said to have executed it, a greater and more salutary one for mankind could scarcely have been conceived. If the man ever lived who undertook any thing of the kind, he was unquestionably the greatest, most philanthropical genius of antiquity ; for without predecessor or example, he perfected a work which no other great man of antiquity, so far as we know, ever thought of or dared to imitate. There are several circumstances, however, which render it certain, that this whole account is one of those sacred traditions of the Egyptians, which are altogether destitute of historical credibility. Indeed, the simple fact, that a plan of such universal benevolence and extent is attributed to a king, who, with his people, had hardly escaped from a state of gross barbarity, is amply sufficient to bring it into complete suspicion. That greatness of mind and sympathizing goodness of heart, which look carefully to the welfare of others, and make the highest honor to consist in doing good to the whole human family, do not immediately succeed to a state of barbarity. Between the low degree of cultivation in which Osiris must have found himself and his people, and this height, there are numerous grades which cannot be overleaped. The men belonging to those times, of which we have credible accounts, and who were able to advance but a few degrees in active philanthropy and universal benevolence, were slow in their progress. History also informs us, and we have often had occasion to observe, that this high degree has been attained only by a few choice spirits, after a long course of great, national improvements.

Notwithstanding, it is worthy of particular remark, that this fable does exhibit at least the traces of a plan which embraced the whole human family, and contained that universality which we have hitherto searched for in vain among all the benevolent plans of antiquity. By attending closely, however, to the changes of the Egyptian mythology, which was in other respects very peculiar, we shall, as I think, be able to discover the origin of this fable, without supposing even that spirit of universal benev-

olence which it displays, to have been common to the old world. It is not improbable that there was once such a man as Osiris, perhaps an old king, who deserved well of his people. After his death, his people, on account of his merits, doubtless placed him in the heavens, and began to worship him as a deity. This is indeed credible, from the fact, that the ancient nations were very much accustomed to express the gratitude which they felt towards their benefactors, by rendering them such honor.* It is well known, however, that the name of Osiris, by the multiplication of sacred traditions, gradually became ambiguous.† The result was, that people soon began to consider it as the name of a higher deity, such, for instance as the sun,‡ whose benevolence was universal, and embraced mankind at large. Now, in this case, the signification of the name being changed, the old historical truth respecting a former king in Egypt, was no longer applicable to it. The account itself, therefore, was also changed, so as to be accommodated to the new idea which had been attached to the name of Osiris, by which, as people were anxious to make him in reality great and divine in his actions, they appropriated to him the exalted project which has already been described. Besides, it was very agreeable to Egyptian pride to make an Egyp-

* Plutarch indeed, *De Isid. et Osir.*, p. 419 seqq., Reisk. ed. [Vol. VII.,] objects to this opinion. It is evident, however, that he was led very violently to oppose an explanation, which probably had many advocates even in antiquity, by his great aversion to the well known mythological system of Evemerus. The arguments which he uses for the purpose, are evidently too weak, and too intimately connected with his opinion respecting the nature of demons, —an opinion which led this otherwise excellent writer to make many superstitious assertions.

† Comp. Heeren, *Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der alten Welt*, Th. I. S. 434 ff.; [fourth ed., Th. II. Abth. 2, S. 124, *Hist. Schriften*, 14r Theil.]

‡ Osiris was unquestionably represented under a symbol of the sun, which induced many of the ancients to consider him as the sun. This cannot be denied by Plutarch himself, notwithstanding his opposition to this interpretation. Vid. the treatise already quoted, p. 465. The arguments in favor of this position, have been collected together by Jablonsky in his *Panth. Aegypt.*, Part I. p. 125 seqq.

tian king the means of rescuing all other nations from a state of barbarity ; and to whom was it more suitable that this act of great and universal benevolence should be imputed than to the good deity whom they worshipped under the name of Osiris ? The whole account, therefore, was probably nothing more than a fiction intended to convey the idea that all wisdom and improvement had their origin in Egypt, and were thence extended over the world ; or perhaps a sensible representation of the truth, that agriculture and the cultivation of the vine every where mark the commencement of genuine civilization, and that the muse and the pleasures of life are to be found in their train.

This fable, however, was unquestionably not invented until after the Egyptian priests had received much information from the Greeks, and probably begun to feel ashamed of such gods as had confined all their acts of benevolence entirely to their own country. At least, Diodorus of Sicily is the oldest writer that gives an account of this tradition.* However this may be, from this fable it is evident, that the ancients considered a plan of such compass and benevolence as a thing very uncommon and extraordinary. The very fact, that the Egyptians represented their supreme god as thinking and acting in such a

* In this place, a learned note upon Cudworth by Mosheim, may be consulted, Kap. IV. § 13. S. 246. u. 47, Jen. ed. Under Osiris, Origen understands water, contra Celsum, l. V. p. 257, Spencer's ed. [De la Rue, Tom. I. 607.] Admit him to be correct, a point which this is not the place to determine, the remarks made in the first place would be applicable even to this explanation ; and it would be easy to point out causes, by means of which this fable obtained such a benevolent extension. The same is also true, if Osiris be taken in general for the moistening and fructifying principle in nature ;—an explanation which Plutarch brings forward in the work just quoted, p. 436 seqq., as the opinion of the wisest of the Egyptian priests, and which he takes much pains to dress up with embellishments. [Creuzer's explanation of the fables respecting Hercules and Osiris, gives a result which, as is easy to perceive, lends equal support to the author's assertion. Consult in particular, respecting Hercules, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, II. 205. 248 ff. 254 ff. III. 309 ff. IV. 244, 2d ed. ; respecting Osiris, I. 257, 267 ff.]

manner, and made him executor of such a plan, in order to procure for him claims to the worship and adoration of the whole human race, is of itself sufficient proof that dispositions, feelings, and plans of this kind, were not attributed to common men.

We are now, therefore, just where we were, when we entered upon the examination of the philanthropical kings and statesmen of antiquity. As yet, we have found no instance of a man who formed a plan of very great benevolence and extent, embracing the whole human family; at least, one that in respect to its universality, we may venture to compare with the plan by which the founder of Christianity has unquestionably distinguished himself. Let us pass on therefore to that class of the benefactors of mankind, to be found in antiquity, which were every where the most celebrated; namely, to that of philosophers and learned men.

PHILOSOPHERS AND LEARNED MEN.

§ 70. There are two ways in which we can ascertain the characters of the plans which the philosophers or sages of antiquity had before them, for the general good. We may either look at the influence which they uniformly exerted, in regard to the illumination, improvement, and prosperity of our race, or we may contemplate the systems of instruction which they formed for the promotion of religion, virtue, and happiness. In the first way, we can ascertain what they actually did; in the second, what, by virtue of their general principles, they might have done, had they rigidly adhered to them.

To speak accurately and judge impartially, we must say, that all the philosophers of antiquity with which we are acquainted, in reality deserving of the name, were either Greeks or Romans. The sages of other nations, Confucius alone excepted, of whom we shall speak farther on, were always priests at the same time, or perhaps the founders of new religions, and hence, the guardians

also of superstition. Instead of engaging in close investigations, respecting virtue and happiness, and the nature of things, as they might have done, they employed themselves in astrology, divination, and such other arts, as, in an ignorant nation, would readily procure for them influence and wealth. When, therefore, we have shown what the Greek and Roman philosophers contributed towards enlightening and improving mankind, before the founder of Christianity, we shall know what benevolent plans have been formed and executed by the sages of antiquity.

§ 71. In order to ascertain what philosophy effected among the Greeks, certain periods of time must be distinguished, in which its influence was very different. Among the philosophers who lived before Socrates, Pythagoras alone excepted, of whom I shall speak in particular a little farther on, we cannot expect to find any very great or benevolent plan for the good of the world. Philosophy, which was then in its infancy, had never exerted much influence of a favourable character upon the public. The seven wise men of Greece, so called, were not so much philosophers, as learned and practised statesmen; and they were principally indebted for their celebrity to the laws which they gave to single states in Greece, to their experience in public affairs, and to the various excellent maxims which they used from time to time to lay down,* and which, perhaps, they sought to render agreeable to their contemporaries by the enchantments of poetry.† They do not, therefore, properly belong to this place,

* Respecting this point, consult Plato in Protag., p. 153, 154, Bip. ed. [Tom. III.]

† So judged Dicearchus respecting these men, and, as it appears, very correctly. Vid. Diogenes Laertius, B. I. Div. 40, and next to him, Cicero de Amicitia, cap. 2. "Thales," says Plutarch, "seems to have been the only philosopher of that age, who was elevated above the affairs of common life by speculation. The other wise men were indebted for this name to their skill in political matters. In Solon. p. 320 [Vol. I.,] where, in general, more is to be found appropriate to this place. [Plut. Lives, &c., Vol. I. p. 134, where, however, the passage is differently rendered. The Greek runs thus: Καὶ ὅλως ἔοικεν ἡ Θάλασσα μόνον σοφία τότε περαιτέρω τῆς χραισῆς ἐξικεῖσθαι τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις ἀπο τῆς πολιτικῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ νόμα τῆς σοφίας ἡπηρεῖ. TR.]

but rather to the class of legislators and statesmen, of which we have already spoken. All the other wise men who lived before Socrates, employed themselves in things which not only had little or no reference to the improvement and happiness of mankind in that age, but in things which were often positively injurious in this respect. A great part of them gave themselves up to dark and laborious investigations, or rather to dreaming and making fictions, about the universe, its origin, and the matter of which it must have been composed ; about the heavenly bodies, their nature and motions, and the laws that regulate the changes of the physical world, while they entirely neglected what immediately concerned the happiness of mankind and was especially worthy of the attention of every genuine thinker.* The other class of wise men looked more to their own interests, and loved a productive wisdom. Hence, they cultivated that ostentatious eloquence, which is ready to pour itself forth in extemporaneous effusions upon every subject, and, consisting of verbose chattering rather than connected sense, is calculated to astonish the multitude, while, by selling trash respecting the art of civil government, carrying on war, making laws, &c., and by an appearance of acuteness, they deprived the ignorant youth of their precious money, and defrauded the people of Greece. These men are so well known under the name of Sophists, or rather so infamous, that I need not give any farther description of them. The peaceful dreamers of the first class, in giving themselves up to vain speculations, at least did no injury to others, and many of them, considered in another point of view, were really useful citizens. The Sophists, on the other hand, were not only superfluous to the nation, but dangerous, in various respects. The complaints which Plato makes about them to

* To this place, belongs a witty and very animated description of this idle and fruitless wisdom, given by Socrates, Plato in *Theaet.*, c. 24, 25, Fischer's ed. [Bip. II. 70 seq.,] and a fragment of Euripides, which is illustrated by Valkenaer, *Diatrib.* in Euripidis perditor dramat. reliquias, p. 26 seq. Comp. also Xenophon, *Mem. Socr.*, l. I. c. 1. § 11 seq.

Socrates, in almost every dialogue, are indeed said to be somewhat exaggerated and unjust. It is certain, however, that their instruction was the means of filling the Grecian youth with a proud conceit, a pernicious selfishness, and habituating them to a certain want of thought, and the fact serves to explain the origin of numerous errors which existed even in the administration of political affairs, and greatly hindered the advancement of that genuine, serious and severe wisdom, which actually enlightens and improves. Besides, it can be shown that they inculcated many principles, which, of necessity, brought religion and virtue altogether into suspicion; and that they sought to recommend vice by the most specious delusions of eloquence, and all the subtleties of a puzzling system of dialectics. To their pernicious instruction is also to be ascribed a great part of those extravagant immoralities, which sprung up so rapidly and unexpectedly, in the most flourishing states of Greece, and which neither Socrates, nor his pupils, were able to limit or restrain. By this time, it is easy for us to draw the conclusion, that it is needless to look for any very comprehensive plan of benevolence among the philosophers before Socrates. The influence which their knowledge and opinions exerted upon society, will not allow us to think of finding any among them who were capable of forming such purposes as those of which we are in pursuit.

§ 72. I have already admitted that Pythagoras ought to be excepted from the above general remarks. It is certain, that, agreeably to the taste of his contemporaries, he also gave himself up to dreams respecting the above named subjects. Indeed, his fiery, vivacious, and enthusiastic spirit, must have greatly inclined him to such a course. On the other hand, however, it is also certain, that of all the philosophers before the time of Socrates, he paid the most attention to real happiness and moral improvement, and, as far as his sphere extended, he unquestionably labored very actively in their behalf.

It is to be regretted, that the history and opinions of this extraordinary man, are involved in such doubt and

uncertainty. Owing to the great want of contemporary writers and of credible accounts, as well as to the shameless fabrications of his senseless admirers of later ages, a cautious writer cannot assert any thing respecting him without some measure of fear. From what can be gathered, however, with any degree of certainty from ancient authors respecting Pythagoras, he seems, both in his institutions, and the instructions connected with them, to have had a plan before him, which did honor both to his intellect and heart. Tiedemann, who, with Meiner,* has unquestionably thrown very great light upon the life and philosophy of Pythagoras, considers this plan the greatest which a philosopher ever conceived. "It was his intention," says this scholar, "in the first place, to enlighten his pupils, and exercise their understandings in difficult investigations, and then lay down precepts in accordance with which, they might, by means of good laws and religion, improve their fellow citizens and fill them with an increasing reverence for virtue, while they were to keep every thing concealed from the uninitiated in their own breast, and bring nothing to light any farther than it was carried into execution, and impart no more to any one, than he comprehended; by which means, a lasting influence was ultimately to be acquired for himself and school, in regard to the welfare of the human race. This was certainly one of the most exalted plans ever invented by a mortal!" According to this writer's opinion, therefore, the society of the Pythagoreans was to consist of a number of wise men firmly united together, who were to give laws, and impart instruction to the great mass of the people, according to their wants, and to carry their discoveries to the utmost boundaries of human knowledge; at the same time, in diffusing their light among the common people, they were to exercise wisdom and caution, and carefully avoid making schisms, and getting up new parties and sects. Such a society, he thinks, must have prov-

* In his *Geschichte des Ursprungs, Fortgangs und Verfalls der Wissenschaften Griechenland und Rom*, Bd. I. Buch. III. S. 178 ff.

ed a great blessing to mankind, and the spirit itself have been peculiar to the Pythagorean institution.*

It is true that such a society, could it have existed, must have proved a very great blessing to the human family. The number of sages formed according to the Pythagorean plan, would have constituted as it were, the soul of mankind, and of course directed every member of this huge body, and diffused into it, as much good as was compatible with the interests of the whole, and as could be enjoyed. It is certain, however, that Pythagoras, even upon the supposition that he possessed such ingredients as Tiedemann puts into his hands, never thought of giving his plan that extent, which is the object of our present inquiry. In Graecia Magna, the place that he selected at the close of his long travels, as the sphere of his operations, he unquestionably intended to imitate what he had seen among the Egyptian priests, but that he had contemplated the formation of a society, which should aim at the welfare of the whole human family, cannot be proved. He must have been short-sighted indeed, not to have perceived the impossibility of carrying through such a plan merely in one great nation. Whenever a secret society begins to exert a marked influence in public affairs, it excites the jealousy and hatred of all the uninitiated, who soon grow suspicious of any thing of the kind, and because they are excluded from it, become its opposers. If, in addition to this, such a society is also distinguished by certain manners and customs, in which it very evidently lays claim to higher perfections than ordinary men possess, and begins to throw all others into a humiliating shade, however just its claim, it unavoidably incurs the displeasure of all the uninitiated, and transforms them into irreconcilable enemies. Now this was actually the case with the Pythagoreans, for there were many things striking and peculiar in their mode of life,† and in the sequel this institution soon

* Comp. Griechenlands erste Philosophen, S. 328, and the same author's Geist der speculativen Philosophie, Th. I. 77—79.

† Tiedemann, Geist der spec. Philos., Th. I. Seite 81 ff.

learned the truth of these remarks. Pythagoras himself lived to see its destruction, in those states, in which, and for whose government, education, and happiness, it had been established, and to experience the ill effects of such institutions upon the multitude; for, notwithstanding their great incapacity of governing themselves, they can with justice require all those who are to govern them, to regulate their conduct by well known principles, and object to being forced slavishly to submit to authoritative decisions, which are calculated to excite suspicion from the very fact of their emanating from impenetrable darkness, and must ever be hateful to a people not accustomed to the most capricious despotism. Should any one, therefore, admit that Pythagoras actually gave his plan that great universality, of which we are seeking to find an example, for which, however, there is not the least historical evidence, he would, on account of the impossibility of such a project's being carried into effect, be obliged, at the same time, to accuse this philosopher of a great want of sagacity; such a want, indeed, as could not have existed in a mind of such penetration as that, evinced by this institution, even upon the supposition that it was confined to the modest limits of a single state, or a few small nations.*

§ 73. But though philosophy before Socrates, with the exception of what has been said of the Pythagorean institution, exerted but little beneficial influence upon the hu-

* [Pythagoras has been very unjustly underrated in Adelung's *Geschichte der Philosophie für Liebhaber*, I. 261 ff. This author considers him as an ambitious juggler, fond of power, who, like a Jesuit-general, by means of his secret order, aimed at obtaining the universal control of Greece. Barthelemy, on the other hand, represents him in a very fanciful point of view, and paints the Pythagorean union in fine colors, *Voyage d'Anacharsis*, Tom. VI. chap. 75. [Travels of Anacharsis the younger in Greece, translated from the French, 8 vols., the last consisting of maps, plans, views, and coins, 1793. Tr.] Wedekind, however, *der Pythagoräische Orden*, *Obscurantenvereine u. s. w.*, L. 1820, S. 1—57, especially S. 40 ff., thinks, that, after all, Barthelemy has not washed away the complaint of deception respecting Pythagoras; that his order must be considered as having been a kind of secret Jesuitism; and that Pythagoras inspired his pupils with his own spirit.]

man race, yet, under the guidance of this excellent man, she became in a measure the benefactress of society ; she began to leave the heavens, where she had hitherto lived in pursuit of empty dreams, and, entering the habitations of men, to fill them with light and happiness. It would be superfluous for me to speak particularly of the merits of this man in this respect, or describe the wise, disinterested, and unwearied activity, with which he endeavored both to teach his countrymen and set them a virtuous example, while he devoted all his powers to the promotion of the public good. Ancient and modern writers have done him such justice as the most venerable of all the Grecian sages, and said so much that is good and excellent respecting his religious views, his virtue and active philanthropy, as to render it needless for me to attempt the justification of my opinion in detail, when I say, that I consider him as having accomplished more towards enlightening and improving mankind than all the philosophers of Greece. Not only did he effect much in his native country, directly, but he was also at the head of a school, from which went forth wise men, who from him had learned, at least, to approach nearer to human life in their investigations, than had hitherto been done ;—who had begun to contemplate man more closely, and select him, with his condition, faults, faculties, and relations, as the object of their inquiries ; and, finally, to consider it as the business of philosophy, if she would be of any real utility, to employ herself chiefly in those important matters that relate to morality and happiness.

Even this excellent man, however, influenced as he ever was by an unwearied zeal in doing good, and deterred neither by a weight of poverty nor the derision of the ignorant, by the hatred of his nation nor the poisoned chalice, from laboring with all his powers for the good of his fellow citizens ;—even this man, notwithstanding the extraordinary talents with which he was gifted, and the warmth of his heart in the cause of human happiness, confined his benevolent views entirely to the narrow limits of his own native country. His plan,

agreeably to his own confessions, was, to mortify the false wisdom which had led so many of the Sophists astray, puffed up the youth of his native city, and proved prejudicial to the state itself, and make it the object of ridicule and public contempt;* while, on the other hand, he showed the Athenians, both by precept and example, that true wisdom enlightens the understanding with clear notions, warms the heart in the cause of virtue and disinterested philanthropy, and diffuses tranquillity and joy throughout the soul. His zeal in promoting the cause of wisdom, and procuring followers and friends for her, among his countrymen, amounting almost to enthusiasm, produced in him a firm conviction, that he had been destined by the Deity himself, to be the teacher of the Athenians, and hence, however opposed, was called upon to labor and suffer with unshrinking boldness in behalf of virtue and truth, and, in his excellent language, to obey God rather than the judges, whose chief anxiety was to prohibit his instructions.† How unweariedly he acted, for a long series of years, under the influence of this conviction, and how many obstacles he was enabled to overcome by his extraordinary courage and incredible perseverance, we are informed in the history of his life. Possessing, therefore, as Socrates appears to have done, those qualities of intellect and heart, which are indispensable to the formation of a philanthropical plan of universal extent, in him, if in any man of antiquity, we should expect to meet with such a plan; and yet, not even So-

* [Comp. the author's excellent representation of the ironical method of teaching, of which Socrates availed himself even in opposing the Sophists, in his treatise, *De ratione docendi Socratica*, in the *Opusc. Academ.*, I. 309—390.]

† Examine the excellent apology, which Plato wrote for this man, his teacher, which contains the best explanation of Socrates' entire mode of thinking, and his plan, to which he always faithfully adhered. His fine expression, that he must obey God rather than his judges, is to be found in the 17th chap. of this defence [Bip. I. 69.] Whose mind, on its being mentioned, does not immediately revert to the similar and equally noble declaration of Christ's apostles?—Acts 4: 19.

crates ever thought of any thing of the kind. On the other hand, he was satisfied with rendering himself useful as far as in his power to his own native country and to the strangers that resorted to Athens for the purpose of hearing him. He, therefore, whom many writers have pronounced the greatest of men,* was far inferior to the founder of Christianity; for the latter was not only to his native country what Socrates sought to be to his Athens, but he also devised a plan, by means of which he taught a much purer wisdom than Socrates, and intended to make all the nations of the earth acquainted with virtue of a far more active character than that which he recommended.†

§ 74. The pupils of Socrates separated in a short time, according to history, into numerous parties, which differed from each other exceedingly, in their general principles; some of them retaining more of their master's opinions, and other's less. But a few of Socrates' friends remained faithful to the natural and useful mode of philosophizing, by which he had acquired so much merit, and among these Xenophon was the most distinguished. The rest either gave a new import to his prin-

* [As Schlosser, for instance, who in his *Kleine Schriften*, I. 55, has pronounced Socrates the greatest of men, and next to Christ himself, or Riem, who, in the work entitled, *Christus u. die Vernunft*, c. 6. S. 92—104, has placed Socrates still higher.]

† Comp. Zimmermann's treatise, *De praestantia religionis Christianae, collata cum philosophia Socratis*, in Schellhorn, *Amoenitat. litterar.*, Tom. XI. p. 93 seqq.; [also in Zimmermann, *Opuscul. Theolog. etc.*, Tom. I. 549—603, Tigur. 1751. With respect to Socrates, is also to be compared, Luzac, *Oratio de Socrate cive*, L. B. 1796; Krummacher, *Ueber Geist und Form der Evangelien*, S. 234—236; Wigger, *Sokrates als Mensch, als Bürger, und als Philosoph*, 2e Ausg., Neustrel., 1811. Engelmann, *Sokrates und seine Zeit*, Fftl. 1812; Ferd. Delbrück, *Sokrates. Betrachtungen und Untersuchungen*, Köln, 1819; and particularly Brandis, *Rheinisches Museum*, I. 118 ff; Hamann's *Schriften*, II. 1—50. Very partial and unsatisfactory is the assertion made by Tennemann in his *Geschichte der Philosophie*, VII. 40, that the efforts of Socrates and Jesus in behalf of mankind, notwithstanding the great resemblance between their characters, objects, and deaths, were so strikingly different in their results, because Socrates sought to enlighten and ennoble his nation through reason, and Jesus through feeling.]

ciples, and, notwithstanding his declarations against the mania of dogmatical philosophers to do so, and his efforts, while living, to counteract such a tendency, worked them up with admixtures of foreign materials into new systems, or else extended their inquiries to a multitude of subjects, to which he, not considering them of sufficient, general utility, had never once condescended to attend, and hence, turned back to the very errors against which he had endeavored to guard them. In so doing, they wandered in many respects from the only correct way of observation and experience, which Socrates had pointed out to them, and gave themselves up again to the vain speculations for which he had evinced so little esteem. Thus originated the celebrated sects of the old philosophers, which succeeded Socrates, and indeed came forth from his school, each of which had peculiar excellencies as well as defects.

That *party spirit*, which, at this time, became more and more bustling and obstinate, proved the means of enlightening many dark regions of human knowledge and quickening reflection, and, by the numerous disputes which it engendered, occasioned new and deeper investigations, is perhaps to be admitted. Its prevalence however, appears, as it were, to have drawn philosophy away again from the sphere of operations in human society to which Socrates had assigned it, and to have shut it up in the narrow limits of the schools. The different sects that arose from time to time, were constantly involved in quarrels; men engaged in subtle investigations; philosophers began to retire from active life, in order that they might give themselves up without disturbance to their delightful contemplations; and the desire of defending their own systems, and confuting their opponents, banished from their minds that zeal, under the influence of which, Socrates had labored to make all his convictions of truth, useful in life, and improving to mankind.

This change unquestionably deprived philosophy of much of that influence which it might have exerted in the cause of virtue and happiness, among the Greeks. There is, therefore, great reason to believe, that we ought

not to look for any very extensive plan of benevolence, for the good of the world among the Grecian philosophers that succeeded Socrates, many of whom had transformed philosophy into a useless system of scholastic bickerings. Very few of them had any direct influence in the affairs of their own country, or those of other nations. Many of them were tolerated at courts, merely as pleasing and agreeable chatterers, too eagerly engaged in their own gratification even to think of laborious and extensive plans. Others had retired into quiet solitudes,, and still gardens, and would not have any thing to do with great matters and projects. Others, again, had set themselves up for severe judges and censors of morals and manners, and, dissatisfied with society and its constitution, by renouncing all the conveniences of life, and even cleanliness and propriety, sought to become patterns of a manly and grave virtue, without reflecting that their conduct made virtue hateful, and rendered themselves ridiculous.* Finally, the most of them contended in their schools with other parties, obtained their necessary support by declaiming, and were as far as possible from thinking of effecting great and salutary revolutions.† Under such circumstan-

* Such, as is well known, was the conduct of the Cynics. Arrian, indeed, makes his Epictetus draw an entirely different picture of the true Cynic, Diss. l. III. c. 22,—a picture, so attractive, and composed of such exalted traits, that one cannot contemplate it without admiration and deep emotion. It is perfectly manifest, however, that it is merely an ideal conception, to which no Cynic ever attained, and to which it is hardly possible ever to attain. The same must also be said of what Lucian says in his little work, entitled *Cynicus*, in praise of this sect. This is not the place to show what the Cynics ought to have been. They must be described as they were.

† Seneca, as he informs his friend Lucullus, in his 29th letter, is anxious that a certain Marcellinus should be improved by the study of philosophy; but he contrives to have this witty genius make many objections to its utility, in support of which he appeals chiefly to the trifling influence that it exerted upon the philosophers themselves. "*Scrutabitur,*" says Seneca, "*scholas nostras, et obiiciet philosophis congiaria, amicas, gulam.* Ostendit mihi alium in *adulterio*, alium in *popina*, alium in *aula*, ostendit mihi lepidum philosophum Aristonem, qui in *gestatione disserebat*: hoc enim ad edendas *operas* tempus acceperat—Hos mihi *circulatores*, qui philosophiam honestius neg-

ces, it is not to be wondered at, that even the name of philosopher, honorable as it once was, had become contemptible in many places; for to be one, often required nothing more than that a man should join some party, assume its dress, carry around in his mouth the principles of some school, which in many cases were not even understood, and, like all ignorant sectaries, make use of them as watchwords, and defend them with impudence and boldness.

It would be unjust to deny, that, notwithstanding these faults, philosophy was always the means of effecting much good among the Greeks, as it kept a valuable amount of knowledge in circulation, aroused many a heart to the performance of worthy actions, and yielded consolation in

lexissent, quem vendunt, in faciem ingeret." I think this single passage sufficient to justify the remarks I have made respecting the great mass of common philosophers. If one wishes for any thing more in confirmation of them, he may add the complaints of Epictetus, found in Arrian, Diss. l. IV. c. 8. I will not appeal to what Lucian has said upon this subject in many passages, particularly in his Symposium, and Reuiviscent., nor to Juvenal's Sat., l. I. sat. 2. v. 1—20, as, for well known reasons, the opinion of these men might be considered as partial. [It may be well to add a short passage, taken from Cicero, Quaest. Tuscul., II. 4, which exhibits his opinion of the ancient philosophers, and is worthy of particular attention.—"Quotusquisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus, ut ratio postulat? qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiae, sed legem vitae putet? qui obtemperet ipse sibi et decretis suis pareat? Videre licet alios tanta levitate et iactatione, iis ut fuerit non didicisse melius: alios pecuniae cupidos, gloriae nonnullos, multos libidinum servos, ut cum eorum vita mirabiliter pugnet oratio, quod quidem mihi videtur esse turpissimum." Of Seneca's works, comp., De Constan. Sap. c. 3, Epist. ad Lucil. 20, 108, 116, and concerning the inconsistency between his writings and character, Meibomii Vita Maecenatis, c. 22. p. 132. 133; of Quintilian's works, the Prooem. Instit. Or., p. 13, ed. Spald; of Plutarch's works, what Diogenes says respecting Plato, De Virtute Morali, VII. 776, what he says respecting Antisthenes, Dion Chrysost. Orat. 8, Reisk. I. 275, and what Cleanthes says respecting the Peripatetics, Diog. Laert., VII. Segm. 173. p. 474 seq. ed. Wetst.—According to Gellius, N. A. XVII. 19, the most of those who appeared to philosophize, were said scarcely to be philosophers in words; "Philosophos esse hujuscemodi ἀνευ τοῦ πράττειν, μέχρι τοῦ λέγειν;" as is objected to the Academics, Plut., Lacon. Apophthegm. VI. 858, Reisk.]

affliction.* The Stoical school, in particular, may be considered as having been the source of much good.† It produced many wise men of active habits, and many serious and venerable statesmen, and, during the most corrupt times, kept up and even extended a kind of reverence for virtue, of which it ever spoke with great warmth, and had an exalted opinion. Among all the noble men, however, who were distinguished from the great mass of common philosophers, and to whom people were indebted for the first named effects, no one will presume to look for a plan of such a character as that of which we are now in pursuit. There is not the least proof to authorize one to do so. On the other hand, well known experience teaches us, that no class of men are usually less enterprising than those who have chosen the lecture room as the sphere of their operations, and once tasted of the silent joy of quiet investigations after the truth. That the philosophers of whom we here speak, were very little disposed to engage in important enterprises, is evident from the fact, that not one of these enlightened men ever dared to attack the base religion of the nation, and substitute better representations of God in its stead, although its absurdity must have been, and, as we are credibly informed, was, apparent to many of them. An attempt of this kind having cost the bold Socrates his life, no others had resolution enough to offer such a sacrifice for the general good.

* Clemens of Alexandria speaks upon this point with much effect, in the first book of his *Stromatum*, especially in the first chapters, and in a critical examination of the value of the heathen philosophy, and its use in the old world, displays much Christian wisdom and moderation. It is to be wished that this man, who was unquestionably the most learned connoisseur of the Greek philosophy, among all the ancient teachers of the Christian church, had always been made use of as a pattern.

† It produced many worthy men, who aimed at what Simplicius calls the philosopher's post in the state, in *Enchirid.*, p. 245 ff. Schweigh. ed. [It may be remarked, however, as Villemain has shown in the second treatise of the *Nouveaux Mélanges historiques et littéraires*, Paris, 1827, that the later Stoics evidently received Christian elements into their system, without knowing it, or intending to do so.]

They sought rather to apologize for the popular religion, and make it harmonize with their philosophical systems, notwithstanding the inconsistencies to which it might give rise. To excuse their timidity in this respect, and give it the appearance of profound wisdom, they called to their aid the general principle, that it is imprudent and injurious to let the people see the whole truth at once; that it is not only necessary to spare sacred prejudices, but in particular circumstances an act of benevolence to deceive the great mass of the people. This was the unanimous opinion of almost all the ancient philosophical schools.* In this way, they justified themselves, in taking the prevailing superstition for what it really was, while they taught and even defended it in public, thereby avoiding the danger which would have been connected with an open controversy upon the subject. Now what could truth expect from men, who, with such trembling caution, brought it their offerings only in private? How would it have been possible for these timid men, who had not courage enough to speak with frankness what they thought, unless in their lecture rooms, and in the midst of their confidential pupils, to extend their views to bold plans of importance and extent?

* Respecting this principle, consult Plato, *De Republica*, l. III. p. 266 seqq., Bip. ed. [Tom. VI. There is a striking censure of philosophers, when they appropriate to themselves the principle, that it is lawful to deceive the people, to be found in Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis*, Vol. VIII. 291. "Many, in order to pass for friends of the gods and for extraordinary men, contrive to give their treatises the appearance of something divine, and render their fanciful conceits important by means of dreams, apparitions, and other such like things. It may be necessary, perhaps, for statesmen to do so, and those who are called, in their efforts at usefulness, to deal with a haughty and unruly people, and, in this way, make use of superstition as a leading string, for the purpose of drawing them to the acquisition of good. It is not only very unbecoming, however, for philosophy to assume such a dress, but altogether at variance with her promise; for she has promised, to teach every thing that is good and salutary, by means of reason, and to deduce the principles that should regulate our conduct, from the gods; and now, as if she despised reason, and treated demonstration with contempt, the very things that had constituted her chief excellence, she gives herself up to fortune-telling, and runs after fanciful dreams.]

§ 75. Evemerus, indeed,* seems to have been an exception in this respect. His well known work, concerning the heathen mythology, appears to have been expressly intended to give a full and naked representation of the superstitious religion of the people. He showed that all the gods, not even Jupiter the supreme, excepted, were originally mere men, and had been exalted to a seat in the heavens, by gratitude, esteem, and a disposition for the marvellous. He divested these gods of that honorable and dazzling splendor, with which, according to his opinion, they had been surrounded by fickle tradition and an inclination for the extraordinary. By relating their deeds without exaggeration and embellishment, naming their birth-places, pointing to their graves, and stripping the old mythology of all its wonders, he reduced them to the class of ordinary men. It is not strange, that such a bold attack upon the common system procured for this man the surname of atheist.† Evemerus, however, was at the foundation not very serious in his opinions. From the few fragments of his important work upon mythology, which have come down to us, it is very evident that his only object was, to propose a new hypothesis respecting the different accounts extant concerning the gods. The more learned portion of the Greeks, long before this, had ceased to receive these accounts in their literal acceptance. Many allegorized them, and considered them as enveloping physical truths. Others built systems of different classes and orders of mighty demons upon them, and sought to relieve themselves in regard to these common and often very indecent fables of mythology, by imputing different degrees of perfection to each class of their demons. Now Evemerus proposed a third hypothesis for explaining these ancient fables, which consisted in supposing these gods originally to have been mere men. The

* Not Evemerus alone. Many others treated mythology in the same way. A list of their names is given by Arnobius, lib. IV. p. 147.

† [Comp. Zimmermann, *Defensio Evereri ab Atheismo*, in his *Opuscula*, II. 1052—1080.]

object of his investigations, however, in doing so, was not to disapprove or reject the services instituted in honor of these popular gods. For instance, he was satisfied that Jupiter, who, according to his opinion, was originally nothing more than a man deserving of human esteem, should be considered as a god, and worshipped as such. He only thought that if his method of explanation was admitted to be correct, that these accounts would be better understood, as well as be secured against the objections which people felt respecting the life and actions of Jupiter. He entertained the same views also of the other gods, and it is evident that one might adopt his system, and yet adhere to the common popular religion, and all its ceremonies and abuses, in their whole extent. Many actually did so; his opinion found advocates. Ennius translated his book into Latin,* and it was read in different places with great approbation, but it never led any one to think of making the least change in the regulations of the public religion, or of pronouncing it illegitimate. It is true, the fathers of the church afterwards made a careful use of the assertions of Everemus, whenever they wished to exhibit the irrationality of the heathen mythology,† but they drew conclusions from this man's principles to which he himself was not led, because he had not the same object in view which they were seeking to advance. These remarks, however, I think will be sufficient to show clearly, that none of the wise of Greece ever soared to the formation of a plan that can be compared with Christ's.

§ 76. I pass on, therefore, to the Romans. The influence of philosophy was never so extensive among them before the founder of Christianity, as it was in Greece. For several centuries this nation had had but little esteem for the sciences, and, without their aid, been aspiring after

* Vid. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, l. I. c. 42, [*Tuscul. I. 13, De Legg. II. 14.*] and Abbé Foucher's treatise; *Ueber das System des Evemerus*, in Hissman's *Magazin*, Th. III. S. 249 ff. [and especially Böttiger, *Ideen zur Kunstmythologie*, § 6. S. 186 ff., Dresden, 1826.]

† Comp. for instance, Minucius Felix, in *Octauio*, c. XXI., with the remarks of Elmenhorst and Wower, at this passage.

the dominion of the world.* Philosophy, therefore, was not introduced into this country until at a late period. For a long time, it remained solely in the possession of the rich and distinguished, who had property enough for employing Greek instructors to assist them in acquiring a knowledge of it. A great obstacle to its extension, even down to the time of Cicero, was the deficiency of the Latin, which created a kind of impression, that the Greek was the only language in which the truths of philosophy could be delivered with energy and intelligibility. Indeed, it required a no less genius than Cicero's, to give the Latin as much richness and ornament as were requisite, in order to prevent philosophy's losing too much of its perspicuity and impressiveness, and the philosophical works of the Romans from sinking too low, when brought into comparison with the eloquent writings of the Greeks. The prejudicial effects of this circumstance, even down to the time of this great man, prevented the principles and discoveries of philosophy from becoming so generally known as they deserved.

If, however, philosophy ever contributed any thing towards originating a very comprehensive plan of benevolence among the Romans, it must seemingly have done so, shortly before the founder of Christianity made his appearance. Those who loved and cultivated philosophy in Rome, were the most distinguished men of the state;—men, who, by their influence in public affairs and the important offices which they filled, had been accustomed as it were, to great and extensive plans, and had acquired a power, which enabled them to exert an influence upon the best parts of the world. It would not be wonderful to find that such persons had been inspired by philosophy with a great and philosophical plan, as the circumstances under which they thought and acted, tended very much to prepare them for

* [Hippel, in his *Lebensbeschreibung*, S. 273—278, herausg. v. Schlichtegroll, Gotha, 1801, has remarked in a striking manner, that the Greeks were distinguished for philosophy and the cultivation of taste, and the Romans for activity and an aversion to a sedentary life and mere contemplation.]

the purpose. We search among them, however, for any thing of the kind in vain. That warlike spirit, so peculiar to the Romans, appears here also to have been productive of unhappy effects. The republic was at this time in the midst of the most fearful concussions, and upon the point of being transformed into a monarchy. Such a state of things diverted the minds of these men exceedingly from institutions of this kind, and naturally induced them to have a reference to offensive and defensive war, to political interests and ambitious measures for power, in every plan they invented and carried into execution.

In view of all that has now been said I believe, that, from the influence exerted by philosophers in regard to the general good among the Greeks and Romans, it must be inferred, that none who lived before the founder of Christianity, can ever have conceived the idea of forming a plan of universal benevolence; for if so, they would certainly have left some traces of it in their actions and enterprises. The most of them indeed did but little for their own native country; how then could they have extended their views beyond it? Moreover, as a body, they were all destitute of the courage requisite for removing out of the way, the insipid religion that prevailed among the people, which was the grand object that opposed the progress of general information. This circumstance of itself is sufficient to prove, that these men were incapable of forming any great resolution in favor of wisdom and virtue, and of devoting all their powers to the general good of mankind.

§ 77. Now if, in addition to this, we contemplate the *systems* which they formed respecting religion, virtue, and happiness, we shall perceive that the principles which the most of them adopted, rendered it impossible for their minds to produce a plan of such excellence, as we have in contemplation. Upon this point I must say a few words.

It would require too much prolixity, and indeed it would be superfluous, for me, in this place, to give a development of the systems adopted by the most distinguished

philosophical schools of antiquity. My present object does not require this detail; and besides, the task has already been performed by others. There is a much shorter way of ascertaining how much the ancient philosophers were able to undertake for the general good, upon the supposition that they remained faithful to their principles and thought consistently, and whether their ideas of virtue and happiness could ever have originated a plan of universal benevolence. In order to arrive at a conclusion, we have only to make ourselves familiar with their opinions respecting what constituted the chief good, upon which point they have often expressed themselves with great clearness. Whatever a school affirmed to be the chief good, was, with it, the supreme law of ethics. Now an examination of this principle will enable us to ascertain, whether the man who thought and acted agreeably to it, would ever have been capable of that greatness of soul, which a plan of the given character presupposes.

It will be readily seen, without any suggestions from me, that those schools, which considered either the perception of truth, a quiet state of indolence, or sensuality and the enjoyment of the greatest possible amount of pleasure, as the chief good, would never have been able, by virtue of their principles, to extend their views to comprehensive and laborious plans for the general weal. Is the perception of truth the chief good after which a man must strive? What then can be more his duty, than to avoid all the distractions of great matters, and seek a quiet life, for the purpose of giving himself up entirely and without disturbance to the increase and correction of his knowledge? Is freedom from pain what a man should aim at? then it will be his duty to undertake no more labor than is requisite for the health of his body, and is consistent with lasting rest and tranquillity of mind. According to this system, it is foolish and wicked, to make great and ceaseless exertions of all the powers, and noble and free-will offerings, for the purpose of advancing the morality and happiness of others. The same is true of those who make the chief good to consist in the constant

enjoyment of pleasure. Such must consider it their duty, and the highest wisdom, to take the most agreeable view of things, and, as far as possible, place every thing in that relation to themselves from which they can expect the most enjoyment. A great part of these schools maintained, that the wise man pursued the best course by passing his life in silent retirement, away from the noise of cities and the bustle of great business. Besides, had these philosophers remained faithful to the explanations which they themselves gave of their own principles, they must have considered many ignoble actions at least as allowable, for they would appear to contribute something to the amount of that pleasure which they had elevated to the rank of the chief good.

I am very far from attributing to Epicurus and his adherents, all the shameful consequences which have so often been deduced from the principle of this school respecting the chief good, by an enumeration of which, the eloquent Cicero was able to represent its system in so prejudicial a light. If the assumed principle had been explained with as much acuteness as it usually was by Epicurus himself, those ambiguous and indefinite notions, which introduced so much confusion and obscurity into his system, would have been rendered clear and definite. Finally, had this principle been purified from those other base and excursive thoughts that did not properly belong to it, it might perhaps have been made the foundation of a system which to many would appear to be the only true and tenable one, for, as rightly understood, it is nothing more than the position of rational self-love. As Epicurus employed it, however, as his followers understood it, and as, indeed, from not having been defined with sufficient accuracy, it might be explained, it must have occasioned misunderstandings and extravagances, and have altogether suppressed that mode of thinking which enables a man to perform every thing for the general good, and makes one feel, that he never tasted of the greatest and sweetest pleasure, until he had rendered himself useful to others, and been the means of adding considerably to the amount

of human happiness in the world. How was it possible for that mind to elevate itself to great and benevolent plans, which looked upon the Deity as unspeakably happy, merely because he had nothing to do,—nothing which called for the exercise of care? To free one's self from all business, and avoid all effort to promote the happiness of others, was, according to this system, to imitate God.

From these observations it follows, that very many of the philosophers of antiquity must have been prevented by the very principles upon which their morality was founded, from having any conception of that greatness of mind in which alone such a noble resolution as that of which we are here speaking, could have originated. It is not a matter of astonishment, therefore, that we meet with no exalted thoughts of the kind among them. In order to be capable of such, they must have changed their entire mode of thinking, and the whole system of their conceptions.

§ 78. For those sects, however, which declared virtue to be the chief good, whatever definition they gave to their fundamental position, a way certainly stood open, which would have led them to the attainment of this greatness, provided they had had eyes to see it, and spirit and strength to enter upon it. Hence, we actually find that the Stoics approximated nearer to the idea of such a plan, than any others. Their principles were, that all men, connected together as they are by a natural relationship, ought to consider each other as brethren; that, as a body, they are the citizens of a great state, and hence, bound to love and assist each other; that he who acts from selfish motives, does not understand his true interests, but that he only lives agreeably to nature, and of course, happy, who lives for others; and that the human soul is related to the Deity, and maintains its dignity only when it endeavors to think and act in unison with the Deity. These principles, considered in respect to their consequences, might certainly have led those who adopted them to the formation of such a plan as that devised by the author of Christianity. Indeed, they did almost produce such an

effect upon Cicero, who, as is well known, in his work, *De Officiis*, mainly followed the principles of the Stoics; for he concedes, that it would be far more agreeable to the laws of nature, for any one, like the benevolent Hercules, to undertake the greatest labor, and the most unpleasant tasks, for the preservation and happiness of all nations, than to pass one's life in quiet solitude, without any unpleasant circumstances, amidst a flow of the most delicious enjoyments. But he questions the possibility of the thing, and, as it were, sinks down again, without having reached the height to which he was approximating.* The same assertion is also to be made respecting other passages to be met with here and there in the ancient writers, which are of an exalted character, and appear to contain sparks of that divine fire with which the founder of Christianity was animated in the formation of his resolution. Not a spirit of antiquity before him, was bold and strong enough to trace out the essential positions of Stoical morality to their results, and from them to develop the great thought, that enlightening and improving mankind, and rendering them happy, is not only the highest goal of human virtue and exaltation, but one within the reach of possibility.

§ 79. Perhaps certain other positions, which were received into the system of the Stoics, and connected with the above named principles, caused even those men, who had been enlightened and ennobled by this philosophy, to remain within the ordinary narrow limitation. The ideal perfection of their wise men was so extravagant, and had so little respect to human nature, that he whose object was, to acquire that genuine human greatness, which consists in a due application of all the powers to the welfare of the world, was led on to the attainment of a specious and empty sublimity, after which human nature must forever strive in vain. The Stoical sage loved virtue without regard to profit, merely for her own sake, and strove after that state of indifference to pleasure and pain

* *De Officiis*, l. III. c. 5. § 25.

and every external change, which divested them of all disturbing power, and ensured him that peace and tranquillity of soul, which would enable him to keep the laws of eternal order constantly before him, and to obey them with alacrity. He aimed, in a certain respect, to surpass the Deity himself, and acquire renown for an excellence, of which the most exalted beings are destitute.* To this firm, serious, and immovable sage, all ordinary men, from his own height downwards, must have appeared as a far lower class of beings,—as contemptible fools, and miserable slaves. Such a man, therefore, had too little sympathy, too little tender feeling for each individual of the human race, and, of course, too little active love to the multitude at large, and, on the other hand, was too busily occupied with his own greatness and the attainment of that precipitous height, which he looked upon as the goal of human perfection, even to think of forming a very comprehensive plan of benevolence, which should, in reality, be adapted to the human race, in all its circumstances. As soon as a man formed the design of approximating to this ideal perfection, he necessarily receded from that kind disposition, that benevolent condescension towards all men, and that sympathizing pliability which are indispensably necessary to the formation of such a plan; how far, no one has exhibited in a clearer light than Cicero, well as he knew how, in other cases, to bring forward what was of public utility in the morality of the Stoics. The excellent observations that he makes upon the character of Cato the younger, in his oration for Muraena afford a most exact confirmation of what I have just said. Perhaps of all who ever attempted the difficult task of reaching the perfection of a truly wise man, agreeably to the requisitions of the Stoical philoso-

* Seneca in his work, entitled, "*Quare bonis viris mala accidunt, cum sit providentia,*" among other things, makes the Deity say the following to those wise men, educated according to Stoical principles: "*At multa incidunt tristia, horrenda, dura toleratu! quia non poteram vos istis subducere, animos vestros aduersus omnia armaui. Ferte fortiter, hoc est, quo Deum anteceditis. Ille extra patientiam malorum est: vos supra patientiam.*" Cap. VI

phy, Cato went the farthest.* Now Cicero shows that this very thing unfitted him for the circumstances in which he was placed, and rendered him incapable of performing his duties in a manner, wise, and useful to the public.† The unnatural and extravagant notions of true wisdom, therefore, contained in the system of the Stoics, directly opposed as they often were to the simple feelings of human nature, must have deprived every Stoic of the disposition to make wisdom and virtue, universal; for, agreeably to the confessions of this party itself, it was possible for but a few to approximate to that exalted pattern of a truly wise man, which had been marked out by its members as the goal of perfection.‡ He who carries every thing to such an extreme,§ and adopts precepts with so little regard to human nature, must, on that very account, confine himself to a few, and can never think of projecting a universal plan.

* At least Seneca thought so, *De constantia sapientis*, c. 7.

† Comp. the excellent passage in Cicero's *Orat. Pro Muraena*, cap. 29—31.

‡ No man has said this in a more impressive manner than Epictetus, one of the greatest men of this school. Vid. Arrian's *Diss.*, l. II. c. 19. p. 288 seqq. [Tom. I. Schweighäus. *Epicteteae Philos. Monumenta*.]

§ "Isti ipsi mihi videntur," says Cicero in the passage quoted, c. 31, "*vestri praeceptores et virtutis magistri fines officiorum paulo longius, quam natura vellet, protulisse: vt, cum ad vltimum animo contendissemus, ibi tamen, vbi oporteret, consisteremus.*" Seneca, however, very frankly admits, that the requisitions of the Stoical morality are often too extravagant. "*Quaedam,*" says he, *De Benef.* l. VII. c. 22, "*praecipimus ultra modum, vt ad verum et suum redeant.*" And directly after, chap. 23, "*quoties parum fiduciae est in his, quibus imperas, amplius est exigendum, quam satis est, vt praestetur, quantum satis est. In hoc omnis hyperbole excedit, vt ad verum mendacio veniat.*" Plutarch, in his work, *De Stoicorum repugnantibus*, p. 309, [Reisk. Vol. X.] quotes a passage of Chrysippus, in which it is expressly asserted, that the morality of the Stoics was too poetical to be adapted to human nature.

FOUNDERS OF RELIGIONS.

§ 80. It remains for us now to cast a glance at that class of the meritorious men of antiquity, who may, in the next place, be compared with the founder of Christianity, namely, the founders of religions. In this respect, a survey of the whole of antiquity presents us with very little. Most of the ancient religions had no author, as far as we know, but appear to have been originated gradually by the united operation of various causes;* and those that had, were miserable superstitions, prejudicial to morality and happiness, and will not authorize us to reckon those who introduced and perfected them, among the benefactors of mankind. What Plato and other discerning men among the Greeks thought of the poets of their nation, considered as the authors and propagators of mythology and the popular religion, is well known; as also how they found it necessary to animadvert upon the pernicious influence which such fables and representations exerted upon morals, and to take measures for its diminution.† Whatever might be said respecting the mythology of the Greeks, is equally applicable, and in some respects more so, to the various kinds of superstition which prevailed among other nations. None of these religions was, in any respect, calculated for great and extensive plans. Indeed, every one of them contained so much in its fundamental principles and precepts, of a national and local character, that it could not well be imparted to several nations.

In the whole circle of antiquity, therefore, before Jesus, only three men can be discovered, that exhibit the dignity

* Meiner, *De falsarum religionum origine ac differentia*, in the *Commentationes Societ. Reg. Scient. Goettin. Antiquior.*, Tom. VII. p. 58 seqq.

† Plato, *De Republica*, l. III. p. 260 seq. Bip. ed. [Tom. VI. ;] particularly Plutarch, throughout his works; for instance, *De audiendis poetis*, *De Iside et Osiride*, etc., [Vol. VI. u. VII.,] and Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* l. II. c. 5.

of benevolent founders of religions, and of course deserve an honorable mention in this place ; namely, Moses, Zerdusht or Zoroaster, and Kong-fu-tsee or Confucius.

§ 81. *Moses*, the zealous defender of Monotheism, at a time when Polytheism was universal, was the author of a religious constitution, which was designed, in all its parts, for preserving free from corruption, at least so far as a single nation was concerned, a belief in one true, supreme God, and guarding it against all the abominations of idolatry. To accomplish this object in a happy manner, it was indispensably necessary for him to separate the nation in which so precious a jewel was to be deposited for safe keeping, from other nations; give it a residence in a country separated by natural boundaries from all other countries ; and, by appropriate laws and regulations, confine it to this residence, and render all intercourse between it and foreigners, as difficult as possible. It was necessary for him to furnish this nation with a constitution which should bring it in direct and lasting opposition to all other nations, and to treat it as a holy people, chosen by the supreme God himself, and entirely consecrated to his service. Such was the object which Moses actually kept in view, and such the spirit, which, in all his acts of legislation, he labored to breathe into his countrymen. All his precepts, whether they had reference to civil order; or the cultivation and improvement of land ; to domestic life, religious ceremonies, or the relation of the Israelites to foreign nations, contributed something towards reminding them that the only and supreme God was their ruler and king, their country his favorite country, and they themselves his chosen property.* Moses, therefore, was obliged to confine the plan of his religious establishment, entirely to the nation for which he legislated, and

* No one has represented this in a more detailed and convincing manner, than Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus*, the whole first book of which is devoted to the exhibition of this proof.

was incapacitated from even drawing other nations into it. The grand truth, that is, the doctrine of one only true God, for the preservation of which, among his fellow citizens, every thing was designed and executed, together with the practical truths depending upon it and connected with it, does indeed constitute the substance of all rational religion, and consequently deserves universal extension. Moses, however, in his time, would have labored for the accomplishment of such an object in vain, had he attempted it. He had enough to do, for securing the continuance of this great doctrine simply among his own people. Accordingly he kept this thing in view, and so entirely was his attention occupied by the almost insuperable difficulties opposed in the way of his religious institutions, by the roughness and indocility of these wild nomads, that he did not once think of imparting this truth to other nations. At any rate, the more every thing he prescribed was adapted to his own nation, the more was it calculated to give this nation an individuality in the country of which it was to retain possession, which rendered any intermixture with foreign nations, impossible; and the less capable were his regulations of a wider extension. So entirely was genuine Mosaicism bound to Palestine, that it could not have been transplanted into another region without losing its real nature and form.* Hence, the reason why the author of Christianity, whose plan was of unlimited extent as has already been shown, resolved to abolish the Mosaic regulations. Moses, therefore, does indeed remain worthy of lasting honor, and must be reckoned among the greatest benefactors of our race, for having preserved and cherished the kernel, out of which Providence intended, at a future period, to develop a religion designed for the world, and calculated to

* Michaelis, *Mosaisches Recht*, 6 Theile, 8, [Commentaries on the Laws of Moses, transl. by Smith, four Vols. 8vo, Lond., 1814, Tr.] gives the best explanation of this matter. Comp. also his *Commentationes in Societat. Reg. Scient. Goetting.*, praelect. IX. and X.

render all happy ; but who would examine him to discover a plan which may be compared to that of Jesus ?

§ 82. In what relates to *Zerdusht*, or *Zoroaster* the Mede, of whom I am now to speak, I suppose it to be decided, that the books of the *Zend-Avesta*, lately brought into Europe,* contain the real principles of this reformer of the Magian religion. The close investigations that have been made respecting the genuineness and antiquity of this remarkable work, have turned out so much to its advantage, that nothing farther can be justly required.† By the same means it has also been shown, that the spirit of the religion taught by Zoroaster, notwithstanding the superstition it contains, and much that is incapable of proof, and the numerous ceremonies and petty formalities with which it is burdened, is, in many respects, benevolent and exalting to

* [By Anquetil du Perron. Much had been said, both by French and English travellers, though but little was known, respecting the religion of the ancient Persians, the Guebers or Gauders and their sacred books, the *Zend-Avesta* or *Living Word*, previous to the time of this gentleman, who, during a residence in India, acquired a knowledge of the sacred language in which these books are written, and, on his return to Europe, in 1762, brought copies of them with him, a French translation of which he published in 1771. Every thing respecting them has since been thoroughly investigated by the Germans, as may be seen by consulting the books referred to in the notes, a short article in the *Bibl. Repos.*, No. II. p. 407, and the articles, *Zend-Avesta* and *Zoroaster*, in the *Conv. Lex.*, or the *Encyclopedia Americana*, now in a course of publication. TR.]

† Comp. Meiner's four treatises respecting Zoroaster and the religion of the Persians, [in which the genuineness of the *Zend-Avesta* is attacked,] in the *Commentationes Societ. Reg. Scient. Goetting.*, with Kleuker's Inquiry, [in which its genuineness is defended,] respecting the character, age, and worth of the *Zendic* books, in the second Vol. of his *Anhang zum Zend-Avesta*, and Tychsen's first *Commentatio*, *De religionum Zoroastricarum apud exteras gentes vestigiis*, Vol. XI. of the *Commentationes* already quoted, p. 112 seqq. [The following have decided in favor of at least the partial genuineness of the *Zend-Avesta*, viz. Wahl, *Gesch. der morgenländ. Sprachen und Litteratur*, S. 341; Buhle, *Lehrbuch der Gesch. der Philosophie*, I. 66—71, where a connected representation is given of the arguments on both sides; Heeren; Joh. v. Müller, *Werke* VI. 135; Creuzer, *Symbolik*, I. 655; and Rask, *Ueber Alter und Echtheit der Zendsprache und des Zend-Avesta*, von v. Hagen, Berlin, 1826.]

the heart. The worshipper and servant of Ormuzd* considered himself as belonging to the kingdom of light, and felt himself called upon, in common with the holy creator of this kingdom, and those pure heavenly beings that derived their existence from him and surrounded his throne, to fight with all his efforts against the kingdom of darkness. He was to labor, therefore, with ceaseless exertions in all he did, to transform every thing to light; he was to spread existence, life, power, and happiness around him, and preserve himself pure from extravagance and vice, while, on the other hand, he was to impede and suppress every thing that might injure and destroy, or produce disorder in the moral and physical world.† This religion infused into its adherents a still and peaceful disposition, which led them to keep public utility in view; and which quickened, cultivated, and beautified every thing, and made even the brute creation, so far as they are harmless, and inanimate nature itself, objects of tender solicitude and benevolent care. Such a disposition the remnant of these adherents, formerly so numerous, in a measure, still possess.‡ History, however, furnishes us with no trace of Zoroaster's ever having intended to impart his religion

* [According to the Zoroastrian religion, two beings coexisted from eternity, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the principles of the universe. Ormuzd is the purest and eternal source of light and all perfections. Ahriman originally partook of the light, and was so far good, but by envying the light of Ormuzd, he eclipsed his own, and became Ormuzd's enemy, and the father of every thing evil and of all wicked beings, who, in conjunction with himself, were drawn into combat with the good. Ormuzd and Ahriman completed the creation at different periods, the former being father of the good, and the latter of the evil, and the one mutually striving with the other after the dominion of the world. TR.]

† Kleuker's short representation of the religious doctrines of the ancient Persians and their sacred worship, according to the Zendic books, in the first part of the Zend-Avesta, S. 1 ff., or his treatise respecting the nature of the worship to be paid to Ormuzd, as founded by Zoroaster, in the Zend-Avesta im Kleinen, Th. III. S. 135 ff.

‡ Niebuhr, Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien, B. II. S. 49 f. [Voyage en Arabie. The work has been imperfectly translated into English by Heron, but the edition is not at hand. TR.]

to the whole world. That he was anxious, indeed, to have other nations assent to his principles, he has declared in no very indistinct terms ; and considering the zeal, amounting almost to enthusiasm, with which he sought to give them currency, it was very natural that he should be.* From the Zendic books however themselves, it is clear, that his entire plan was laid out for his native country, and in general, could have been carried into effect only in the despotic governments of Asia. Every part of it had reference to the Bactrian kingdom of the Medes, in which Zoroaster made his appearance, as a founder of religion, and a legislator. His object was to transform the despotic government which he found there, into a mild and paternal one ; the established orders of which the nation was composed, into a well arranged and sympathizing whole ; and the rough nomads who constituted a great part of the people, into the industrious and happy inhabitants and cultivators of a land which nature had richly blessed.† Notwithstanding all the great, and in some respects, exalted conceptions of Zoroaster, therefore, respecting the kingdom of light under the control of the good principle, and its future triumph over wickedness, he was never able to form the resolution of collecting all nations into it, and thus becoming the benefactor of the whole human family.‡

* Comp. his life in Hyde, *De religione veter. Persar.*, cap. XIV., and in Kleuker's *Zend-Avesta*, Th. III.

† Heeren, *Ideen über die Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten alten Völker*, Th. II. S. 400—423, [fourth ed. Th. I. Abth. 1, S. 433—461, *Hist. Schriften*, Th. X.]

‡ [Besides, it is a fact worthy of particular consideration, that the Zoroastrian religion was but little adapted for universal extension, and radically healing the moral diseases of mankind. The only proper object of religious homage is at least kept entirely out of the view of the people, by means of the obscurity in which the real character of Zeruane-Akherene is involved. The doctrine respecting Ahriman is essentially different from the diabolology of the Bible, and irreconcilable with Monotheism. The worship which it inculcates is almost entirely lost in a worship of nature, which cultivates an inclination for magic and astrology, and in which the elements and creatures with their genii, are invoked. In this case, a multitude of external, strange, trifling, and indecent exercises and ceremonies, are

§ 83. Finally, equally limited were the plans of the Chinese *Kong-fu-tsee*, or *Confucius*. It may be doubted whether this man should be reckoned among the founders of religions, or be considered as belonging to the class of philosophers. He never pretended to be a divine messenger, and never appealed to revelations, but solely to the principles of reason.* As, however, he was the founder of a party which still exists, and has the form and name of a religious sect, it seems proper that he should be mentioned in this place. That he never extended his plans beyond the limits of his native country, is evident from the whole tenor of his life.† The greater part of it was spent in travelling around among his fellow citizens, and recommending to all the practice of integrity and virtue. By means of the influence which he exerted upon the chief magistrate in the little kingdom of Lu, where he was born, he was enabled to give it a better constitution; but this influence being diminished by a change of disposition in this magistrate, he left court, and turned back to the troublesome, and for him at that time, dangerous business of a travelling teacher of virtue, in which he continued until his death.‡ When he died, his hopes of

required, which are altogether incompatible with a free and pure morality, and often cherish inhumanity itself. Comp. Schlegel, Ueber den Geist der Religiosität aller Zeiten und Völker, I. 263—319. One will therefore hardly be able to approve of Ewald's opinion, (*Die Religionslehren der Bibel*, I. 110,) that Zoroaster must be admitted, in a certain sense, to have been inspired. So far is this opinion from being necessary, that even Ewald himself concedes, that Zoroaster may have borrowed the best part of his religion from the Old Testament; and Jahn, in his *Biblical Archæology*, III. 151—153, has shown this to have been the case, from a multitude of examples, and the same has been done in *Zoroaster's Life*, (Kleuker's *Grosser Zend-Avesta*, III. 14.) Comp. Storr, *Opuscul. Acad. II.* 425; Prideaux's *Connexion*, I. 269. 262 seqq. Lond. 1808. Tr.]

* * Zoroastre, Confucius et Mahomet comparés comme Sectaires, Legislateurs et Moralistes, par Msr. de Pastoret, p. 389 and 396.

† Vid. his life in the work: *Confucius, Sinarum philosophus, sive scientia Sinensis*, p. 117 seqq.

‡ With respect to his principles, compare Noel, *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex*, and his *Philosophia Sinica*, both printed at Prague, 1711.

the success of his efforts were so small, that he almost despaired of the possibility of improving his fellow citizens.* If, in addition to this, we take into consideration the despondency so peculiar to him, and the almost faint-hearted humility with which he used to judge of himself, it will appear evident, that he was incapable of bold undertakings or great plans.†

§ 84. Among the benefactors of the human race, whose merits I have now described, the *priests* of the old nations have not even been deliberately mentioned. They are in no respect worthy of a place among the honorable men that have occupied my attention; for though this order was always appointed for the express purpose of preserving true religion, and extending good dispositions and feelings, yet it is well known from history, that the priests of the ancient nations not only neglected this important calling, but that they acted in direct opposition to what had been imposed upon them. They were every where zealously careful to maintain and propagate the crudest notions of religion, and the most senseless forms of superstition; to cry down and suppress all the new light and information that might be derived from philosophy, while they favored the divisions and bitter hostilities which originated in a variety of superstitious religions, and employed them to their own advantage. Very high notions were ordinarily entertained of the wisdom of the old Egyptian priests, and it almost became a custom to look upon them as the guardians of profound mysteries, and to send the greatest men of antiquity to them for instruction. They

* Compare his life, already quoted, S. 121.

† [Ewald, indeed, 60 ff. 122 ff. and elsewhere, has very properly suggested many things in opposition to the too low opinion entertained respecting the doctrines of Confucius in Less, Ueber die Religion, I. 426 ff. The morality of Confucius, however, ranks very low, and is almost entirely destitute of thorough-going religious elements, as is shown in the Chouking, un des livres sacrés des Chinois, par Gaubil et de Guignes, Par. 1770. It embodies nothing like common rules of wisdom and uprightness for the regulation of rulers. Did its laws and religion contain a sound, living principle, China would not present us with the miserable spectacle of a stagnant nation.]

were, however, very unworthy of this honor.* They bent all their powers of artifice to securing their dominion over the Egyptians, and maintaining the dependence of the kings of that country upon their order,† without doing any thing towards enlightening and improving the people. Indeed, it was necessary for them to favor the extravagant superstition for which Egypt was so infamous in antiquity, in order to strengthen their own authority. The Grecian priests did not hang together like those of Egypt, nor act so much in accordance with a regular plan. History, however, affords unquestionable evidence, that, by supporting a superstitious religion, they proved equally prejudicial to truth and morality.‡ Now, if the human race are so little indebted to the priests of these two nations, considered, as they were, the most distinguished of antiquity, what shall we say of those who were unable to excite any opinion of their being possessed of particular merits? Enough! It is needless to search after any benevolent plans for enlightening and improving mankind, in an order whose very existence depended upon the prevalence of superstition, and which even went so far as to summon power, fraud, cunning, and every kind of art to its aid, in order to retain the human mind in darkness. With this state of things the priests were well pleased; and hence, the plan of Jesus was, as has already been shown, evidently devised for the purpose of taking away the authority and even the existence of an order, so dangerous to truth and morality.

Hitherto, therefore, we have searched in vain among all the benefactors of the human race to be met with in antiquity, in order to find a man, who thought in as great, noble and benevolent a manner as the founder of Christiani-

* Meiner's *Historia Doctrinae de Deo vno*, p. 36 seqq.

† Heeren's *Ideen*, which has so often been quoted, Th. I. S. 368 ff. [Fourth ed., Th. II. Abth. 2. S. 108—134. 166 f. 190 f. 300. 348 f. 406 f.; *Hist. Schriften*, Th. 14.]

‡ De Pauw, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Grecs*, Tom. I. p. 315 seqq.

ty, and succeeded in the attainment of enlarged views and the formation of plans of general utility. The result of our investigations is manifestly this : The human race have at all times had great men, who, whenever circumstances required, and special occasion presented, with a noble solicitude in various ways devoted all their powers to the welfare and improvement of their brethren in the respective countries to which they belonged. The state of the age, however, in which they lived, and the mode of thinking then prevalent, restricted them to narrow limits, and unhappily induced those spirits which were the most capable of bold undertakings, to confine their attention to plans, which savored more of warlike courage and strength, and a disposition to conquer others, than of rational benevolence and gentle goodness of heart. Benevolent views extending to all, and plans intended for the good of mankind at large, were unheard of in antiquity. The standard which people then possessed, was a standard for estimating a greatness of mind entirely different from that boundless wisdom and goodness, which grasp at the world, and are wholly engaged in the universal diffusion of knowledge, virtue and happiness.

§ 85. As, therefore, there is no instance of such a man to be met with in history, so, as a general consideration, it is very probable, that we shall search even in the poetical world in vain for a hero, who ever attained to such greatness. Indeed, it is a matter of fact, that no ancient poet ever set up before himself such an ideal perfection. Homer, that inimitable master at sketching and portraying human character, that exquisite painter of the morals of his age, never conceived of such a thing. His heroes think and act as the limited knowledge of those times and the dispositions and feelings of men, almost in a state of total barbarity, required them to do.* The descriptions which he gives of his very gods are destitute of every trace of real greatness and exaltation. He who has been

* Comp. Köppen, Ueber Homers Leben und Gesänge, Abschn. III. S. 165 ff.

educated in any measure agreeably to the principles which Jesus undertook to make universal, would be ashamed to think and act like the gods of Homer. The discerning philosophers of antiquity itself discovered his faults and censured them, in this respect. Though Virgil exhibits the superior learning and refinement of his age, yet he is by no means so happy in his moral descriptions as Homer, nor so nice in the formation of a character. His Æneas gave himself up to the control of fate, without ever devising or undertaking any thing great or extensive. In general, the greatest men delineated by the poets of antiquity were heroes, and on that very account, very far removed from the formation of such schemes of benevolence, as those of which we are here in pursuit. With the exception, therefore, of the very feeble traces of an all-comprehensive goodness, to be met with in the fictions above quoted respecting Osiris and Hercules, which, by the by, come very far short of what the founder of Christianity undertook to effect, it is manifest, that even the poets of the old world were never able to attain to those elevated views and that greatness of thought, which shine forth from the intentions of Jesus.

The plan, therefore, devised by the founder of Christianity, was a new one, and without example. The way upon which he entered had never been marked by the footsteps of a single human being. No mind before him had ever conceived of a plan of such compass and particular benevolence. What conclusion must be drawn from this wonderful phenomenon? What shall we infer from it with respect to the dignity and authority of the man, whose thoughts were wiser, nobler, more exalted, and more benevolent, than those of the greatest men before him? Let us pass on to this investigation.*

* With the *part*, here brought to a close, compare Appendix D.

PART III.

FROM THE ALL COMPREHENSIVE AND BENEVOLENT PLAN,
DEvised BY JESUS FOR THE GOOD OF THE WORLD,
IT FOLLOWS THAT HE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY
MAN, AND A TEACHER SENT OF GOD.

§ 86. FROM the preceding considerations, it is evident, that the plan devised by the founder of Christianity, of which an explanation has been given, was unique in its kind, and, in regard to its unlimited extent in particular, entirely new. No inference, however, must be drawn from this fact in favor of Jesus, before it is decided that his great purpose *was not a chimerical one, nor an impracticable dream*. If it were so, then those exalted spirits of the old world, in whose company we have hitherto spent our time, deserve great commendation for having never once thought of projecting a plan for the whole human family,—great commendation for having confined themselves to projects adapted to their circumstances, the practicability and means of whose execution they saw before them, instead of following after impracticable, though alluring dreams. We must, therefore, vindicate the plan of Jesus from the objection that it was a *chimerical* one. This will be our *first* consideration.

§ 87. We shall then endeavor to form a conception of the character of a mind which is capable of great enterprises and plans, and unfold the qualities with which it must be furnished. It will thus be made evident, that the founder of Christianity possessed, in a very high degree, those

powers and faculties which designate a great mind, and that he has exhibited them in the plan which he formed for the general good. In it we shall discover a wisdom and penetration, a firmness and decision, a benevolence and goodness of heart, which will justify the conclusion, that he is unquestionably the greatest man that ever thought and acted upon earth. This will be our *second* consideration.

§ 88. Finally, if we can show, that the founder of Christianity lived in circumstances which would, in the natural way, have suppressed and suffocated all these faculties; if we can show that they were not developed according to the laws that usually regulate the formation of the mind; that, on the other hand, every thing appears to have been regulated by laws entirely new, and to be met with in the case of no other man; and that we cannot rationally and consistently account for the development of these extraordinary powers, without supposing an especial and unusual influence of the Deity himself; then we shall, as I think, be justified in looking upon the founder of Christianity as an extraordinary teacher, and honoring him as such. This will be the substance of our *third* consideration.

I. CHRIST'S PLAN NOT AN IMPRACTICABLE ONE.

89. The greatest and most benevolent project ceases to be the result of genuine wisdom and greatness of mind, as soon as it becomes a dazzling dream and it can be shown, that its author neither possessed human nature, nor had a proper knowledge of human circumstances and events, and hence, struck upon thoughts which the profound sage, under a conviction of the utter inutility of all his labor, would never dare to carry into execution. In this light some have endeavored to represent the plan of Jesus which has been described, and thus bring it into suspicion. Indeed, the idea, in itself considered, of acting in any way for the good of all, has been look-

ed upon as a conceit rather splendid than practical. It has been alleged, that it is impossible even to *express* the religious notions, which it was Christ's object to make universal, in all languages, and bring them within the comprehension of all nations. It has been maintained, that a *universal religion* is as impossible a thing as a *universal medicine*, and that, considering the infinitely great differences necessarily prevalent among men in regard to thinking, judging, and perceiving, it is foolish to aim at producing the same convictions in all men, and warming their hearts with the same feelings; that, in general, diversities of judgement and opinion, are not so great evils as weak heads usually maintain; that, on the other hand, they quicken the spirit of investigation, and ultimately prove the means of leading to the discovery of truth; and hence, that he, who would take away this freedom of thought, and make all men harmonize in their decisions, not only betrays great ignorance of human nature, but would rob the human race of one of its most important and sacred prerogatives, and load it with the most horrible and insufferable chains; that it has been seen, that Jesus was quite unable to execute his plan; and that the Gospel did not effect that uniformity of conviction, that general peace, that exaltation of human nature, and that fraternal union among men, for which his plan was mainly intended; that, on the other hand, the wild extravagancies and the vices of every kind, together with the divisions, contentions, and endless disturbances, which always prevailed among Christians, and often proved highly destructive to their harmony, afford the clearest proof of the chimericalness of the idea of establishing universal peace among men, by uniting them in one religion, and educating them in conformity to the same principles and precepts.

These objections, which, in themselves considered, are indeed important, and, from experience, seem to acquire almost invincible strength, are very far from being new. They were early brought forward by Celsus, in his well known work against Christianity. In modern times, how-

ever, they have often been repeated in a manner adapted to add to their force.* We will, therefore, reflect upon the subject, and see whether the idea of laboring for the good of all, generally speaking, contained in it any thing impracticable, and is to be reckoned among chimerical dreams; whether, in particular, the project of uniting all mankind in the same faith and religion, was a vain undertaking; and finally, whether Christianity, as taught by its founder and friends, was incapable of becoming a universal religion. From an illustration of these three points, the above objections will appear to be utterly futile.

§ 90. *Is it therefore, generally speaking, possible for a man, by means of a benevolent project, to operate for the good of all?*—Were any one to think of forming a plan, the benevolent effects of which should be immediately perceptible to each individual, in order to make all mankind, without exception, happy in the same way, he would indeed engage in an impracticable thing, and give himself up to empty dreams. No one, however, who honestly uses words in their ordinary acceptation, understands *plans of great universality*, in so strict a sense. We should not say that a king acted in accordance with an empty plan, who resolved upon governing his subjects in such a manner, as to render them all happy, because it might be impossible for him to render each individual of them completely happy. On the other hand, every body would understand such a resolution as implying, that he labored with the greatest care and zeal to contribute to the welfare of his people, as far as the imperfection of human affairs would admit. If the majority of the subjects were rendered happy by the government of their prince, it would be all that could be expected, and no inference could be

* Vid. Origen against Celsus, lib. III. p. 118, and lib. VIII. p. 425. [p. 454 and 795, Tom. I. Opp. de la Rue.] Those who have lately brought forward these objections anew, are sufficiently known. [The Wolfenbütt. Fragmentist, fragment second; "The impossibility of a revelation, to which all men can yield the assent of a well grounded faith;" Lessing's *Beyträge zur Geschichte und litteratur*, IV. 288—365; also printed in Doederlein's *Fragmente und Antifragmente*, II. 1—120, to which follows an answer, S. 121—304.]

drawn from the number of those who were either incapable of this happiness, or unwilling to enjoy it, to prove that his resolution to do good to all, was a chimera. To act by means of a benevolent plan therefore, for all, is to form a plan which may become useful to all, so far as human circumstances admit. It is to invent a plan of such general utility, that it can exert a greater or less influence upon the welfare of all, according as external circumstances favor its execution. In the formation of such a plan, therefore, respect is paid in the first place, to the imperfection of human affairs. He who projects such a plan never thinks of being able to exert as efficacious an influence upon every individual, and of doing every one as much good, as he would be glad to do.

As little can any one who contemplates the formation of a plan of benevolence for the benefit of all, think of rearing an institution, which shall in a manner accomplish the purpose at once. The greater the extent of a man's undertakings, the more difficulties will they involve, and the more time will they require for being carried into execution. This is especially the case with regard to those plans that have reference to enlightening and improving mankind. People do not readily relinquish those convictions and opinions which have once been adopted, and by various circumstances rendered dear and venerable. On the other hand, they usually adhere to them with an obstinate pertinacity, as well as to those customs and modes of action in which they were educated, and with which they are usually perfectly satisfied. It requires much time to reform a single man; how much more then will be necessary to renovate and regenerate a nation, or the whole human family? This view of the subject renders it perfectly evident, that he who delineates a plan of universal extent, cannot think of carrying it speedily into execution, but must fix upon a long series of years, or rather of centuries, for the gradual extension of his improvements. Such a plan, from the very fact of its great elevation and universality, can never be realized in the highest perfection to which the original con-

ception must be carried, but there is a gradual and constant approximation in this respect. The question, therefore, whether it is possible for a man, by means of a benevolent plan, to operate for the good of all his race, accurately stated, is as follows : Is it possible for a man to invent a plan, the general utility of which shall be such, that, if gradually carried into execution, it shall, either directly or indirectly, exert an important and universal influence upon the welfare of the human race at large ?

Now he who resolves to maintain the impracticability of forming and executing such a plan, undertakes to prove a great deal. He must either show, that no human mind can ever possess so much power, wisdom, and comprehensive benevolence, as a plan of this character presupposes ; or he must be able to show, that the human race can never be thrown into those circumstances, and those relations to each other which will enable a benevolent plan to obtain a universal influence. It appears that neither of these positions can be proved in a convincing manner.

For how can the *first* be proved ? It is evident that we are not able before hand and from general principles, to determine with the requisite certainty, what is possible to the powers of the human mind and what not. The human mind has invented things and performed acts, which would previously have been considered as altogether impossible. It cannot be denied that history presents us with very unexpected examples of the most disinterested attachment to duty, the most active benevolence, and the most magnanimous sacrifices for the public weal. Every rational being therefore possesses in kind, the fundamental powers, whether of a moral or physical character, requisite to the formation of such a plan, though in an endless variety of degrees. Now by what means can it be proved, that these powers will never be met with in the high degree, nor cultivated to the perfection, necessary to the formation of a plan of the above description ? Who has explored all the depths of the human mind, and thoroughly examined all the circumstances and relations

into which it may be thrown, and by which its powers may be awakened, exercised and exalted? I must ask farther; who is acquainted with the most secret counsels of Providence, and able positively to assert, that he never will make use of an individual for the purpose of doing an important benefit to the whole human family? And finally, who is able to show, that it is even impossible for God to furnish an individual with all the powers and talents requisite to the accomplishment of such a task? And yet no one, short of all this, can knowingly maintain that the human mind is altogether inadequate to such a plan. Now, as no one will pretend to possess all this knowledge, and be able to adduce such proof, it follows, that he, who, on account of the limitation of our minds, declares the idea of being useful to all by means of a salutary plan, to be a chimera, makes an arrogant decision, to which a discreet and impartial thinker would find it impossible to accede. That the invention of such a plan is too great for ordinary minds, I readily admit. So far are they from being able to form and execute any thing of the kind, that the thoughts themselves lie altogether beyond their reach. A man, however, as I think, must have a very common mind and be a very ordinary genius, who absolutely denies that any human spirit is capable of such elevation, such extension of thought.

As difficult will it be to prove the *second position*, or that the human race can never be brought into those circumstances and those relations to each other, by means of which a salutary plan may obtain universal influence. It is true, that there has never yet been such a period. Hitherto, a multitude of causes have kept mankind so distinct from each other, that all benevolent enterprises and institutions, however general their utility and great their effects, have necessarily been confined to a larger or smaller portion of the human race. Even those inventions, such as agriculture, the art of writing, and the art of printing, whose utility is perfectly clear and obvious, have met with this fate. But how can it be shown that this must always be the case? From what principles

does it follow, that the individual classes of which the human race is composed, will never come nearer together, nor present their hands to each other in friendship, and by degrees learn to share in common what each one has that is good and excellent? It is evident that for several centuries past, the human race have been making gradual and rapid advances towards so wished for a change. Countries have been sought after and discovered, in which were found many nations living distinct and separate from us. Navigation and commerce have brought the remotest parts of the earth into a very close and desirable connexion with each other, and procured an introduction for the light of our knowledge, arts, sciences, and inventions, into those regions whose miserable and savage inhabitants were covered with thick darkness. Who possesses such a clear view of the future as to be able to say that the human race will again lose sight of their interests, forget their arts and knowledge, and sink down into that state of stupid inactivity and indifference, in which each nation, unconcerned for others, merely maintains its own place, and, robbed of the happiness which it might have derived from foreign intercourse, leads a miserable existence? Can this be the intention of a wise Providence, who, according to unquestionable, historical testimony, has hitherto led the human race on to increasing degrees of perfection, and for their advantage in this respect, sought to bring them into a close and heartfelt connexion with each other? Can he be so cruel as to put the youth, hitherto so carefully educated, back again into the imperfect years of childhood? Do present circumstances authorize us even to conjecture that a change is to take place so prejudicial to mankind? On the other hand, is it not probable, that the nations of the earth will continue to approximate together in friendship, and, taught by so much experience, ultimately learn, that the promotion of the general good, and the happy growth of every genuine perfection, depend very much indeed upon this universal connexion? Does not the energetic earnestness with which a multiplication and ex-

tension of commercial associations, a free navigation of all seas, and a recognition of rights, which must be conceded even to those nations far below us, are now every where urged, furnish us with the agreeable hope, that the obstacles to a universal connexion, are gradually diminishing, and the bands of friendship and good dispositions and feelings by which the human race are to be cemented together, are increasing in number, texture and strength?*

The efforts which have hitherto been made by European nations, to obtain more accurate information of all parts and regions of the earth and to form connexions with their inhabitants, have not only been productive of many advantages, but, which is of far more importance, by the enjoyment of foreign goods, the natural result of this enlarged acquaintance, every where given rise to a multitude of new wants of which people were before entirely ignorant. Is it not perfectly evident that in this way the nations of the earth are daily becoming more indispensable to each other; that they see it more and more necessary to continue the intercourse which has once been commenced, in order to prevent the cessation of that exchange of goods upon which even now, so much of their happiness depends; that hence, they contemplate extending their inquiries still farther, making themselves accurately acquainted with every corner of the earth, drawing the other masses of men still distinct from each other, into these general connexions, and, by means of a band of friendship which shall comprehend all, forming them into one great and happy whole? Grant, however, that all this cannot be anticipated, yet unquestionably, no one, unless he is acquainted with the future, or has received from the Deity himself, information of his divine plan for regulating the destinies of the human race, is competent

* [Hess has remarked that it seems to be the intention of Providence to advance mutual intercourse between nations in our day, by the extension of the Bible, and to transform their politico-mercantile connexion, into a moral-religious one; Das Vorsehungsvolle der immer weitem Bibel-verbreitung in unsern Tagen, S. 91 ff. Zurich, 1817.]

to declare it impossible for the nations to be thrown into those circumstances and those relations to each other, by which a benevolent plan may obtain universal influence and extend its blessings over the world.

In what other way it can be shown that the idea of projecting a plan for the good of all, is a chimera and a contradiction in terms, I know not. No one will say, that nothing can be so universally good and useful, as not in all times and under all climates, to increase human perfection. To assert this, is to assume that human nature is not always and every where perfectly the same, and has not the same destination; and consequently, that there are not general wants and general blessings. If, however, man is ever the same,—if he is possessed of essentially the same powers and talents, and subjected to essentially the same wants, duties, and laws of operation, whether he lives in Canada, Otaheite, Greenland, or Japan; then there must be propositions and regulations adapted to him in all circumstances, and capable of rendering him wiser, more peaceful, and better. If then there is a plan of such a character, that its execution would be at all times and places, advantageous to human nature, there is no need of declaring it absolutely impossible for it ever to become thus useful in its results, provided it be conceived of with the above definitions and limitations.

Now the founder of Christianity actually conceived of his general plan with these definitions and limitations. He never said that every individual of the human race should be immediately improved and rendered happy. On the other hand, he asserted that noxious weeds should remain until harvest, Matt. 13: 24—30. He has indeed delineated a plan, which is adapted to human nature, and may be rendered useful to all, but at the same time he has conceded, that its salutary effects would be visible only to mankind in general; and that there would always be many individuals left, who from their own fault would be unable to perceive what related to their own real good. In so doing, he has intimated with sufficient plainness, that the execution of his plan would advance but slowly, and be

connected with many difficulties. He did not consider his great work as an easy affair. On the other hand, he very often spoke of the great obstacles which it would meet with, and so perfect was his knowledge in this respect, that he foretold them to his friends in the clearest and most ingenuous manner.

And, indeed, how was it possible for him not to foresee the great difficulties which must be encountered in the performance of such an undertaking, when neither public nor private power, artful and mysterious alliances, nor any other unlawful means, were to be resorted to for its accomplishment,—when he so recognised and respected the laws of reason, and the moral nature of man, that he would not permit those who wished to advocate his cause, to make use of any thing but appropriate instruction for its advancement? So thoroughly convinced, however, was he, of the excellency of his views and of their agreement with the counsels of God, that he could assert with perfect confidence, that his cause would stand so long as the human race existed. This renders it clear, that the space of time which was to be occupied in the gradual execution of his plan, was the series of centuries that should constitute the duration of the human family. Now, as the idea of operating for the good of all by means of a benevolent plan, in itself considered, and with the above limitations, contains nothing impossible; so neither will the extent of Christ's plan authorize us to declare it a chimera.

§ 91. If, however, notwithstanding all that has been said, it is to be classed among impracticable dreams, it must be, because it is concerned with a universal religion, and it was Christ's intention to lead the human race on to the attainment of harmonious notions and convictions respecting the relation in which they stand to God and the honor due to him. We must proceed, therefore, to inquire, whether the idea in particular, of establishing a universal religion, contains any thing impossible, and whether all efforts made for the purpose, must of necessity remain fruitless.

Here also every thing is reduced to the construction of the plan itself, and the object contemplated in its formation. Should any one attempt to urge upon mankind at large, a religion fixed by caprice, burdened with numerous observances, and destitute of every thing of a moral character, he would indeed venture upon something altogether impracticable. Such a religion would have no foundation in the nature of man. All its ordinances, therefore, would be called in question by reason with the greatest success, and be opposed by neglected, and perhaps even offended, moral feeling. It would every where meet with insuperable obstacles in the difference of countries, the variety of their national wants, and the constant changes taking place in the constitution of civil society. Such a religion, although there have already been many of this kind, has never yet succeeded in obtaining a universal influence.

Equally in vain would be the exertions of the man, who should make it his object to extend an artificial religion every where, and bind all men to its notions and modes of representation, however agreeable the substance of it might be to human nature and its relations to God. By far the greater part of mankind would be unable to comprehend such instruction, presupposing, as it does, an acuteness and exercise of thought, which the multitude neither possess nor are able to acquire; and to those who actually think, the constraint thus imposed upon them, would be intolerable. Human reason is incessantly engaged in putting down the systems in existence, of whatever kind they may be, and erecting new ones in their stead; and yet not one of them, however firm it appeared to be at first, has been able to obtain an authority of long duration, much less of general and universal extent.

Moreover, should any person make a religion the foundation of political institutions, and endeavor to establish a state comprehending all nations, a theocracy extending over the whole human family, he would also meet with opposition from reason, which considers religion as a thing

of the heart, and requires it to be kept entirely distinct from all political affairs. He would be obliged to contend with the innumerable regulations which the nations of the earth have formed for themselves, and will never suffer to be totally abolished. He would be obliged to contend with the immutable wants of nations which gave rise to the peculiarities of their political constitutions, and over such obstacles he would never obtain the victory. It is thus rendered self-evident that the plan of being useful to all mankind by means of a religion, must be conceived of with the limitations and exceptions peculiar to every ideal plan. It is calculated for all individuals, and may be rendered salutary to all, though, on account of the difficulties in the way of its execution, it is not in reality. It gradually approximates towards perfection, though in many respects it remains short of that perfection with which it must have been conceived. It is to be observed, however, that if a religion improves the condition of the human race upon the whole, even those gain thereby who are not immediately subject to it; so that its influence in reality becomes as general as can justly be required.

§ 92. With these preliminary remarks before us, it is easy to pitch upon the qualities of a religion, which shall be capable of becoming the religion of the whole human family. It must be *moral*, intelligible, and spiritual; *moral*, to be adapted to human nature; *intelligible*, to be adapted to the multitude; and *spiritual*, to be adapted to all countries and civil constitutions.

A religion is *moral*, when every part of it has reference to the advancement of genuine improvement and virtue. In such a case, all its doctrines respecting God and his relations to us, must be of such a character as to agree perfectly with the moral law, and facilitate obedience to it. It must also shed a light upon ethics, which shall add to their clearness, and render their sanctity and strictness more intuitive. Finally, it must either prescribe no external rites and ceremonies, or only those whose moral and improving efficacy is placed beyond all

doubt. If a religion possesses this character, it is fitted by its nature to become universal, and connected with that in man, which is the most lasting and unchangeable;—with that, which, in spite of all the various modes of thinking and the difference of external circumstances, ever remains the same,—with nothing less than the fundamental principles of morality. It then stands in a firm and indissoluble union with the conscience, that power of human nature to which it most certainly belongs, and which, operating as it does, with extraordinary force, can never be entirely deprived of sensibility. Then religion lends human nature that help which she always needs, and which she looks anxiously around herself to find. Then religion furnishes human nature with strength for the combat with the inclinations of the heart. Finally, it then exerts so evident and salutary an influence upon every thing that is dear and venerable to man, and worth his anxious efforts to possess,—so evident and salutary an influence, in animating and ennobling him, promoting his welfare, regulating his social relations, and improving his entire condition, that one needs only to form an acquaintance with it to feel its divinity and love it. It is not a cause of wonder, that no religion of the earth has yet become the religion of the whole human family. None that has ever prevailed among men, has, in this sense ever possessed a moral character. Whether the Christian religion does, is to be a subject of inquiry hereafter.

A religion that lays claim to universal dominion over the hearts of men, must also be *intelligible* in matter and form. In regard to matter, it must contain a short summary of those truths of general utility, which the very weakest intellects are able to receive, and which can be delivered and represented in such a manner as to be obvious even to children. As in a universal religion, more depends upon doing than thinking, its essential truths must contain nothing that fosters idleness or is a subject of reflection merely, or a problem for scrutinizing reason to solve. Every doctrine that it inculcates must

be intelligible, adapted to impress the heart, and practicable in life. Hence it follows, that while it is capable of receiving a systematic form, it must be in no respects incapable of becoming active and useful. The truths of which it is composed, must indeed admit of being worked over by philosophizing reason, farther developed, reduced to general principles, and brought into a scientific connexion with each other; for otherwise it would not satisfy those who are under too great a necessity to think and investigate not to be gratified in this respect in every thing, and of course even in religion. The original and ordinary form of a universal religion, however, must be characterized by a natural intelligibility, and possess a clearness and simplicity, which shall render it easy to survey and apply every thing that belongs to it. This intelligibility must be exhibited also in its proofs. They must lie so near to ordinary intellects and common sense as to be as it were self-evident, among the most distinguished of which must be reckoned the authority of God, derived from revelation. With this authority the multitude at large can by no means dispense. They are unable to receive any assistance from the controversies carried on by philosophers respecting subjects of the utmost importance to mankind, or to form an opinion of these dissensions. They are unable even to solve the doubts that arise in their own minds, and therefore, must have the declarations and decisions of God to lead them to the truth, and in all cases furnish them with pacifying security. Indeed, there are moments, as is well known, in which the most *acute thinkers* welcome this guidance, and anxiously desire the aid of this higher decision. A religion, which is to become a universal religion, must therefore possess the form of a revelation, and embody the substance of rational religion.* While it has the tes-

* [This is by no means a contradiction to what is said, p. 107, and to the otherwise well known convictions of the author. He only requires this religion to contain nothing opposed to settled, and universally valid principles, and even positive dogmas to have certain points from which their internal truth and practical importance shall

timony of God in its favor, it must be confirmed by the principles of reason. It must rest upon matters of fact, but not as if it were altogether dependent upon them.

This brings us to the *third* quality by which such a religion must be distinguished ; it must be *spiritual*. It is so, either when it is entirely free from external rites and exercises, and a matter solely of the intellect and heart ; or when it enjoins only those ceremonies and regulations, which can be observed by all nations, and yet do not naturally belong to this religion itself. A religion is local, and consequently incapable of being domesticated in every country, in exact proportion as it enjoins a multiplicity of ceremonies and observances. These usually presuppose an external state of things which can easily be produced, where the founder of the religion resides, but cannot be met with in other places, nor brought about without encountering the greatest difficulties. A religion burdened with such precepts is extremely unpliant. By the claims which it makes, it disturbs external relations, and consequently, on being introduced among foreign nations, interferes with their established constitutions and order of things. On the other hand, it is impossible to see what objections can be made to the universal extension of a spiritual religion. It is entirely destitute of all those ornaments, with which rites and ceremonies addressed to the senses are adorned, and altogether a matter of the heart. Its interests, therefore, cannot be affected by external circumstances. It may take firm possession of every place where there are human beings. It has its own external regulations indeed, but such as are easily accommodated to every civil constitution, and presuppose nothing, not to be met with every where, and it has nothing in itself that renders it incapable of a general reception. Whenever these regulations cease to be essential, as well as in case of necessity, they can be dis-

become evident. Upon this subject, examine Süsskind, Ueber das Recht der Vernunft in Ansehung der negativen Bestimmung des Inhalts einer Offenbarung, in Flatt's Magazin, l. 89—193 ; Reinhard's Geständnisse, S. 95 ff.]

pensed with, without doing prejudice to the chief matter itself.

Hence it is apparent, that the plan of establishing a universal religion, properly contains nothing more than a resolve to bring into general circulation and active operation among mankind at large, rational information respecting their relation to God, clothed with his authority and composed of the revelations of his will. Such a plan, therefore, may be carried into effect, while the greatest difference exists between external religious constitutions, and the various exercises introduced into the public worship of God. The form and regulation of these exercises and institutions may indeed be more or less agreeable to the nature of this religion, but they do not properly belong to it. Such a plan is not opposed by the division of the followers of this religion into various parties and sects. It is concerned merely with the extension of the truths which express the relations existing between God and man. That the human mind will not leave these fundamental doctrines in their original simplicity; that it will reflect farther upon them, and undertake to perfect them and bring them into a scientific form; that it will be unable to refrain from making numerous inquiries and endeavoring to define many things which lie entirely beyond its grasp, and connecting its own opinions, prejudices, and dreams with these principal truths; that it will attempt to create them out of itself and transform them into the pure and independent expressions of its own reason; that hence, will arise a multitude of digressive representations and systems of religious doctrines, and consequently, various parties, churches, and sects;—all this, every one who resolves to make mankind acquainted with one religion in common, admits as well known and something, which, as human nature is constituted, it is impossible to avoid. If the principal truths only remain, upon which in this case every thing depends,—if they only remain, and exert a salutary influence upon the greatest part of mankind, then the object of the plan is accomplished.

Now what would a plan of this character and with these definitions, contain that is impracticable? In what respects would it be opposed to the nature of the human mind, and to the course of human affairs? If, as has been shown, the idea of forming a universal connexion between mankind, is not a senseless and impracticable thing, then there is nothing contradictory in the supposition, that a small number of doctrines, respecting God, and his relation to us, and calculated for our welfare and improvement, should gradually find introduction every where, and attain to universal influence, notwithstanding the difference in the modes of thinking and judging in other respects, and all the changes that take place in civil constitutions, and in regulations pertaining to the service of religion. Such an influence is so much the more conceivable in proportion as these truths agree with the moral nature of man. To the same degree also do they become apparent to human reason, and by their clearness and force, take hold of the multitude at large; and finally, so much the more visible is their adaptation, under all circumstances to improve and calm the human heart.

93. If, however, the idea of connecting the human race together by means of a universal religion, is not a fanciful, and in itself considered, an impracticable one, then the plan of the founder of Christianity which has been described, should be declared a vain enterprise, only because his religion was not adapted for general extension. We must, therefore, in the next place, clear up this point.

With the qualities requisite for a universal religion, we are already acquainted. It must be *moral*, *intelligible*, and *spiritual*. No religion on earth possesses these qualities so unquestionably and in so high a degree, as the Christian, as it came from the hands of its founder and friends. This can be shown very clearly from what was said upon the subject in the first part.

The great object which Jesus had before him, was, as has been shown, to form a new *moral creation*, to animate all mankind with new life, and lead them on to the attain-

ment of true moral dignity and happiness. The means by which this was to be accomplished, was the religion which he intended to spread over the world and impart to the whole human family. He must have had a poor knowledge of himself and what he had in view, to have thought of operating by any other means, than that of a religion *in every respect moral*, and calculated for the improvement and exaltation of human nature. It is necessary only to call to mind what has been said respecting the matter of his instruction, in order to discover the moral adaptation of every thing that he delivered. He labored to abolish a pernicious superstition, destroy an unbelief equally prejudicial to morality, and suppress a skepticism, which called every thing in question, even the principles of morality itself. The view of God, therefore, which he laid at the foundation of his system, was of a *moral character*, and represented him as the supreme Father, loving and educating mankind as his children. The consequences that flow from this fundamental view, are also moral. A man cannot honor this supreme Father, by ceremonies and external exercises, but only by doing his *will* and endeavoring to become *like* him. With a religious truth that represents God as the supreme Father, no moral truths can be connected but such as reduce every thing back to love. The practical part of what Jesus taught, therefore, had the great excellency of containing principles, not only benevolent, but pure, noble, and exalted, every where applicable, and adapted to human nature. He who loves God and man according to the precepts of Jesus, is a most willing, punctual, and disinterested performer of all his duties; a most active promoter of all that is true, beautiful, and good; a most faithful and useful citizen of the state to which he belongs; a most sympathizing and benevolent friend of man, and, in all the relations which he sustains, whatever they are called, the author of innumerable blessings. Nor did the *external part* of the religion which Jesus intended to bring into vogue, have any other object in view than strengthening its moral

power, and sustaining its activity. In order to preserve a lasting consciousness of their high calling and their destination in respect to moral attainments, and to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect, his followers were to meet together and unite as a body in pious exercises; the object of these meetings was to be their advancement in virtue and religious improvement. And for what other purpose, than as the means of moral improvement, did Jesus institute his two sacred rites? The one was to make it evident, that as soon as a man becomes a Christian, he takes upon himself an obligation to practise the purest and most immaculate virtue; the other was to admonish him of this with reference to his approximating nearer to the pattern of all human virtue in the performance of his duties.* The religion, therefore, which Jesus destined to become that of the human race, was, in all its parts, a moral religion. On this very account, however, it has such a close and necessary relation to every thing which man, as he is constituted, either is, or is to become; that its principles must be appropriate and valid, whatever be the circumstances of time or place. Christianity will not lose its universally practicable character, until man ceases to be a moral being, capable and in need of improvement. The first and principal requisite to adapt a religion for becoming universal, is found in it to a degree not to be met with in any other religion.

The same is true also of the *second*. Christianity has all the *intelligibleness* necessary to procure for it a universal introduction among mankind. The system which Jesus delivered was not an artificial one, hard to be understood. The main doctrines of the religion which he taught are so clear and obvious, that even children can comprehend them. They consist purely of truths which lie so near to reason and moral feeling, that one needs

* [Baptism represents the object of the Christian religion and the church, which is sanctification. The society into which a man is admitted is to be a pure church. The sacrament, on the other hand, represents the means, a common participation of Christ, and a fraternization through him.]

only to have his attention directed to them, in order to assent to them. Jesus delivered them with such a clearness and simplicity, such an energy and power, that they commended themselves immediately to every uncorrupted heart. His instructions exhibited none of those dialectical subtilties, deep speculations, and prolix demonstrations, which abounded in the systems of the old philosophers, and rendered them, how much soever good they might contain, totally unfit for the multitude at large. The most important truths, which, in the way of speculation and by the greatest efforts of philosophizing reason, had either not been discovered at all, or but imperfectly, were represented by Jesus with such a lucid and touching simplicity, that they must be obvious to the most illiterate, and fill the most acute thinkers with admiration. At the same time, he delivered them as the instructions and expressions of God himself, and thereby clothed them with that authority every where and to the highest degree valid, which is indispensable to the great mass of people, and, with them, holds the place of demonstration and the profoundest proofs, without prohibiting reason however from laboring farther upon them, and endeavoring to deduce them from principles peculiar to itself alone.

It is well known that reason has made great efforts in this respect, and done it in various ways. Hence originated those divisions of Christians into parties and sects, which have often been connected with such sad concussions of whole kingdoms. This, however, from the nature of the case, it was impossible to avoid. If Christianity was to be adapted to all, then it was necessary that it should attract and employ thinkers as well as others. Then it was necessary that its matter should be farther perfected and brought into a scientific form, and also that the human mind should be permitted to make it the object of close investigation, and, even in this respect, gratify its inclinations by reducing it back to ultimate principles. If, while mankind were engaged in this business, they had adhered with inviolable fidelity to the great commandment of Christianity which enjoins love, it would

never have done any hurt. For of what consequence is it, if men do erect various buildings upon the noble and simple foundation which originated with Jesus, and Christians divide themselves into numerous families, each of which dwells in its own house? Will this frustrate the object which Jesus had in view? Do they not all stand ultimately upon the same ground? True, the various buildings erected by Christians upon this foundation must differ greatly in firmness, utility, and goodness; but cannot these parties, notwithstanding this, live peaceably together, each one in the house which it deems the most convenient? Shall I hate my neighbour, my brother, or persecute him, because he does not live in the same house with myself, and finds a better one? And admit his to be in reality worse; why shall I disturb him, when he cannot be convinced of it, and his own house appears to him good and commodious? In this case, he deserves neither my pity nor my hatred. It is enough, that his building rests upon the same firm and lasting foundation as mine.

Without images—Christianity has the simplicity, intelligibility, and brevity, which a religion must have, in order to become universal. It has not been left indeed in the simplicity, with which it was delivered by its founder. Men have cultivated it, and in doing so, separated themselves into sects, but it has lost nothing thereby. The principal truths have indeed been more or less disfigured in the different systems of Christians, but they are still every where to be met with as taught by Jesus and his friends. The Christian religion, therefore, on the one hand, retains its capacity of becoming universal, while on the other, it lays no constraints upon human reason. It consists of truths which the human mind must apprehend and approve of, as soon as they have been exhibited in a proper light; and to approve of such truths, and be in subjection to such laws, is not to be under the necessity of wearing chains. Every thing else is left to each one's own judgement and conscience. He may join that party in which these truths appear to be met with in the great-

est purity, or he may join none,* and only adhere firmly to the foundation. No one will presume to disturb him in the use of this freedom. Constraint and power, by whatever names they are called, are never to be blended in the affairs of religion. The greatest difference in opinions is not to sever that band of fraternal love by which all the admirers and followers of Jesus are connected together. In this love all are to be reunited, here all parties are again to meet together. Hence, this love is to be holy to them and inviolable.† It was through its means alone, that Jesus intended to form a connexion between them, and not by effacing all sectarian distinctions;—a thing in itself impracticable. He, therefore, who is offended because Christians are divided into numerous parties, and who labors to abolish this division by forming a definite system of notions, with which all sects shall be satisfied; he who can even believe it possible, and if so, useful, by the influence of secret associations, to bring all imperceptibly as it were, to unite in harmony,—he comprehends in reality but very little of the great wisdom exhibited in the plan of Jesus. His imagination is heated with an empty dream which is not adapted to human nature, and would be very prejudicial to it, could it be realized. Let us not draw up new creeds, therefore, nor establish new fraternities, for the purpose of uniting all sects together, and bringing their minds to embrace the same conceptions. Would you command the intellect of millions, to cease operating and following its own thoughts? Would you take away the nature of the human soul, and rob it of that freedom, which it derived from God, and which it must possess, if the religion which it embraces is a rational one? Let us learn rather what that means:

* [The author says the same thing in his Sermon on the Sunday of Misericord. Dom., 1796, Vollst. Pred. 2te. Aufl. S. 134 ff.]

† [Very fine is what the excellent Turretin says in his *Opusculi varii argumenti*, T. II. p. 21. [In the *Dilucidat. Philos. Theolog.* Vol. I. p. 318, L. B. 1748.] “*Nesciunt quid sit credere, qui, a se dissentientibus, irascuntur. Misereri errantium, non eos odisse, decet—Optimum controversiarum compendium, Amor Dei et Proximi—*”]

I will have mercy and not sacrifice, in order that we may not condemn the guiltless, Matt. 12: 7. "He who understands the assertion of Jesus," says Origen,* "*Blessed are the peacemakers, and blessed are the meek*, will not hate and abominate those who think differently respecting Christianity from himself." It remains true, therefore, that Christianity can exist, while the greatest difference prevails in modes of thinking,—can extend its blessings over the world, and render every one happy who yields it faithful obedience.†

And this it can do so much the more, as it is also *spiritual*, and hence, can be admitted into all countries, whatever be the modifications of the civil constitution. Jesus prescribed only two ceremonies, which have a noble simplicity and can be observed wherever men reside. Every thing else was left both by Jesus and his friends, to the judgement and conscience of those who might embrace this religion. His apostles indeed laid down a few regulations respecting the public worship of God, but in so doing, they were guided by the circumstances and customs of the age; and besides, they left every society free to change them according to its necessities. There is nothing said of sacred places or stated feasts, of pious journeys and pilgrimages, of troublesome and expensive ceremonies, or a cautious selection of food. The whole earth is God's temple; in every place, man can lift up holy hands; every creature of God is clean and good, and nothing any longer to be rejected. The external form of the exercises of this religion in one country, may, therefore, be entirely different from that of those in another. The religion itself always remains the same, whatever be the drapery with which it is invested. There will indeed be

* Contra Cels. l. V. p. 273. [627, de la Rue.]

† Respecting the accommodating character of Christianity, vid. (Brastberger) Ueber die Mannigfaltigkeit der Religionsbegriffe, in the Versuche über Religion und Dogmatik, I. 1 ff., especially S. 74 ff.; and Pfenninger Familie von Eden I. der Christianer von allen und von keiner Parthey, S. 21—34. According to Klopstock, Messias, XIII. 802 ff. Christ is:

an important difference between its dresses. In every country, they will have that color which the nation likes the best; one will be more useful, another more commodious, and a third more splendid, than the rest. If, however, they do not entirely disfigure the body, nor impede its activity, these differences are matters of little or no importance.*

And what can hinder this religion from harmonizing with every state constitution?† It has nothing immediately to do with political affairs. It fashions every individual, and produces in him that knowledge and those dispositions and feelings which enable him to live contented and happy in any place, and become a useful citizen under every kind of civil constitution, and a faithful subject of every government. It does not according to the principles of its author, erect one state within another, does not in any case disturb the public tranquillity, nor can the interest of the church ever come in collision with that of the government. On the other hand, that state, whose citizens should be in reality formed agreeably to the principles of Christianity, would unquestionably be

Jedem ein Andrer,

Jedem der Eine, den wir vor Allen am innigsten lieben,
Jedem, nach seinem Verlangen, ein unerschöpflicher Geber,
Jedem der Beste; der Beste, der Liebenswürdigste Jedem !]

["To every one Christ is another self; to every one according to his desire, the overflowing, the inexhaustible source of good! to each the most bounteous! to all the most deserving of their love." Coll-
yer's transl., XIII. Vol. II. p. 166, Boston, 1811. Tr.]

* Frommann's treatise, *De religione Christiana omni climati accommodata*, in the *Opuscula philologici et historici argumenti*, Tom. II. p. 595 seqq., where some other reflections are brought forward respecting the possibility of celebrating the sacraments every where, and respecting the likewise universal practicability of the command enjoined by Christianity respecting monogamy.

† "Non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis vestris ceterisque commerciis cohabitamus hoc seculum; nauigamus et nos vobiscum, et militamus, et rusticamur, et mercatus proinde miscemus; artes, operas nostras publicamus vsui vestro; quomodo infructuosi videamur negotiis vestris, cum quibus et de quibus viuimus, non scio." Thus spoke Tertullian respecting this subject to the Romans, who considered Christianity as inseparable from the state; in *Apologet. c. 42. p. 358*, Haverc. ed.

the happiest, and most flourishing. Its rulers would have the most faithful, obedient and active subjects, and the state itself be distinguished for an order which would need no power or constraint for its preservation. In it, the arts and sciences would flourish, without being abused and made the means of poisoning the morals of the people. In it, life would be enjoyed in the most agreeable and tranquil manner, and all property and rights be perfectly secured. No state would be more firmly connected together, and hence, more terrible and invincible to its enemies.*

For even this last circumstance, how much soever it has been doubted, can be clearly proved. Those are altogether mistaken who pretend, sometimes for the purpose of defending it,† at others, of attacking it,‡ that Christianity treats bravery and heroism as vices and transforms man into a defenceless and suffering creature, which chooses to endure wrong rather than defend itself. It is true, indeed, that the religion taught by Jesus was calculated in all its parts for diminishing the causes of war, preventing unjust aggression and offence, awakening every where a lively perception of what is right and equitable, and gradually bringing about a universal peace upon earth. It is equally certain, however, that the commandment enjoining love, which is the soul of all the precepts of Christianity, forbids no man from bravely opposing unjust oppressors, and maintaining his rights by force, so long as that universal peace does not prevail, and cruel disturbers of public security and repose, and unjust aggressors, are every where to be found. Is it not the

* To this place, belongs an excellent passage taken from Justin's letter, ad Diognet., p. 235, 236, [ed. Col. p. 496 extr. - 498;] in which the possibility of Christianity's harmonizing with every political relation is still more finely expressed. [Comp. Neander's K. G. I. 1. 92.]

† Comp. Jennings's well known work, entitled, A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion, p. 18 seqq. and espec. p. 45 seqq., Manchest. (Eng.,) 1799.

‡ Vid. Rousseau du Contrat social, liv. IV. chap. 8. p. 170, Bip. ed. [In the edition of his works of 1792, Tom. II. 191 ff.]

business even of that love, whose efforts are directed entirely to the promotion of the general good, magnanimously to offer itself in sacrifice, as soon as this general weal is in danger? Can he whom it animates, remain idle, when the society of which he is a member, is assailed and threatened with danger? Will he not, on the other hand, select, and be obliged to select, the only way left him in this case, for exhibiting his love, namely, by laying down his life for the brethren? 1 John 3: 16. Besides, is there not every thing to be met with in the soul of a genuine Christian, from which real bravery and rational heroism may spring in as good, if not a better degree than in others? Is bravery grounded upon natural courage, a certain, innate intrepidity? Christianity does not suppress this quality, but only hinders it from degenerating into savageness and temerity. Is genuine bravery accompanied with a contempt of all effeminacy, with diligence and temperance? Christianity inculcates these virtues as indispensable duties. Is bravery without a desire of honor, impossible? No one can possess a livelier and more tender sense of honor than the Christian. Does bravery draw its nourishment in a particular manner, from genuine patriotism? The patriotism produced by Christianity is the noblest, and most zealous that can exist. Finally, are confidence in God and a belief in immortality able to contribute any thing towards strengthening courage in danger and rendering men intrepid? Then no one has less to fear than the Christian. A religion, which, with the tenderest love, combines such an aversion to all injustice, and so much to encourage in the hour of danger, cannot be prejudicial to genuine bravery, but will merely hinder it from degenerating into savage barbarity and inhuman cruelty. If, therefore, Christianity in any state produces in only a part of the citizens, those dispositions and feelings, which its founder intended it should produce, even then, the state, whatever be its regulations in other respects, manifestly loses nothing thereby, but, on the other hand, gains infinitely in the improvement of its subjects.

It may seem, indeed, as if Christianity would be prejudicial to the interests of states, at least from the fact, that it always directs its followers to another life and the rewards of heaven, and exalts them as it were above the affairs of this life, as contemptible trifles. This is an objection to Christianity which one would expect only from such an acute opponent to it as Lord Shaftesbury was. "*Private friendship, and zeal for the public and our own country,*" says this writer, "are virtues purely voluntary in a Christian. They are no essential parts of his *charity*. He is not so ty'd to the affairs of this life; nor is he obliged to enter into such engagements with this lower world as are of no help to him in acquiring a better. His conversation is in heaven. Nor has he occasion for such supernumerary cares or embarrassments here on earth, as may obstruct his way thither, or retard him in the careful task of working out his own salvation."* Were this in reality the spirit of Christianity; did it deprive its followers of all activity for this life and transform them into idle dreamers, and induce them to lead a useless and contemplative life; then it would not only be unadapted to the civil constitutions of the human race, but every state would be obliged as a matter of duty to prevent the extension of such pernicious principles as far as possible. But how little does that man know of the power of Christian philanthropy, who can look upon private friendship and zeal for the public, as far as it is concerned, as superfluous! How little must he be acquainted with the life of Jesus, not to know that Jesus himself was a most disinterested, active, and tender friend! John 11: 5, 35, 36, and chap. 12: 1. The philanthropy and fraternal love enjoined by Christianity, consist in a man's not being weary in well doing; and its principles make him a useless and criminal wretch, who leaves unemployed any talent in his possession, which he might have rendered useful to

* *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Vol. I. 98—100, 1727. Helvetius, *De l'homme*, Sect. 1. chap. 9, has merely repeated these objections without adding any thing new.

the world ; and will such a philanthropy quench zeal for the public ? In the eyes of a Christian, every man is of infinite value, and every circumstance that relates to human welfare, of the greatest importance ; for Christians are convinced that the founder of their religion regards every act of kindness, done to the meanest human being, as done to himself ; and will these very Christians lightly esteem connexions with this lower world, and deem it superfluous to exercise care for the happiness of mankind ? Christianity teaches us that a man's soul is saved, if he has been as pious toward God and as kind and benevolent to man, as Christ was ; if he has acted like Christ, and, as far as able and circumstances required, imitated Him by offering his own life in sacrifice for the good of the world ; and will such a care for the soul create superfluous idlers, whose conversation is not upon earth ? Christianity teaches us that the employments of this life are exercises to prepare us for the higher business of a better world ; that the more faithful a Christian is in attending to whatever is intrusted to him here, the more active, attached to order, and truly benevolent he proves, the greater are the rewards which he is to expect hereafter, and the more important will be the commissions which he obtains ; and can he believe that the disquietudes and cares of earth will obstruct his way to the felicities of heaven ? How unjustly that man treats Christianity, which is entirely made up of activity and disinterested love, who confounds its benevolent doctrines with the conceits of idle hypocrites and foolish enthusiasts, and wrests Scriptural expressions badly understood, as objections against ! If the religion of Jesus has often seemed prejudicial to the honor of princes and the welfare of states, apparently caused thrones to tremble, and incessantly disturbed the general peace ; if it has apparently drawn a great multitude of useful men from society and active life, transformed them into worthless idlers, and shut them up in consecrated prisons ; it is in appearance only. The causes of these disorders are to be sought for somewhere else ; even in the lust of power and the superstition which

have assumed its name. Jesus and his friends recommended obedience to every government without exception, and required one to submit to every human regulation, as long as the society in which he lived, should endure. The principal law of universal philanthropy which they prescribed, does not permit a Christian to be faithless, restless, or cruel ; it binds him much stronger to his native country and renders him much more active in behalf of the general good, than the irrational, and often very misanthropical patriotism which was so greatly admired by some nations of the old world. The religion, which Jesus undertook to make universal, can indeed, by improving the dispositions and feelings of rulers, shedding light every where, and producing genuine and tender philanthropy, prove the mediate occasion of changes also in civil regulations, but they will be such changes as must render the laws milder and more just, add to the venerableness and sanctity of human rights, and in every respect increase the perfection of a state ; and who would not wish every nation to undergo so happy a revolution ? Otherwise, it harmonizes with all constitutions, and is opposed to no useful regulation, and hence, may prosper in every country.*

§ 94. And such being the character of the religion which Jesus intended to make universal, should we have any fears as to the possibility of expressing its principal truths in all languages ?—these truths, so short, so intelligible, and in every respect, so adapted to human reason ? Could Christianity have been embraced by so many barbarous

* [The sophistical reasoning of the Earl of, or Lord, Shaftesbury, here refuted, has, as we are informed, N. Y. Observer, Vol. IX. No. 26. p. 101, lately been revived again by infidels in France, and made the basis of an organized plan for spreading abroad their venom.—How little seriousness do these men exhibit in their inquiries after truth ! How obviously are they governed by a spirit of scorn, levity, and impiety, instead of a spirit of obedience to the will of God ! For some excellent remarks upon this subject, vid. Wilson, On the Evidences of Christianity, Vol. I. Lect. II. p. 46 seqq. For remarks more in detail upon Lord Shaftesbury's reasoning, vid. Essay on the Characteristics, by John Brown D.D., London, 1752 ; especially p. 206 seqq. Tr.]

nations in the first centuries of its existence, if it were impossible to impart it to such as make use of a barbarous language? * It is true, languages have been discovered in modern times, of incredible poverty and imperfection;—languages, into which the *philosophy* of Christianity cannot be translated;—which contain no words for the artificial systems into which the religion of Jesus has been transformed. But why is this necessary? Do we not know from satisfactory attempts, that it is not impossible to express the principal truths of Christianity in the very poorest languages? And cannot the very roughest language be cultivated, enriched, and rendered pliant? Were the rich languages of Greece and Rome at first more copious and perfect, than those of the Kamtschadales and Esquimaux? As a nation's ideas increase, it gains also in expression. Christianity, therefore, instead of being excluded by the imperfection of language, from an introduction into many regions, may become the means of improving and enriching the languages themselves, and thus opening a way for its own universal extension. †

* Comp. what Theodoret says respecting this circumstance, Graecar. affection. curat. Disput. V. p. 839 seq. Tom. IV. Schulz's ed.

† This is not a mere conjecture. It is certain from matters of fact that the extension of Christianity can produce this effect. There is a very remarkable confirmation of this important subject to be met with in Loskiel's *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder unter den Indianern in Nordamerika*, S. 27. [History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians of North America, in three parts; by George Henry Loskiel. Translated from the German by Christian Ignatius la Trobe, p. 21, Lond. 1794. Tr.] "The want of proper expressions in spiritual things, of which they were totally ignorant," says this author, speaking of these people, "was most perplexing. But since the Gospel has been preached among them, the language of the Delawares and Iroquois have gained much in this respect. And in proportion as the believing Indians grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and his word, their languages improve and become more copious." [Comp. Doederlein, *Fragm. und Antifr.* II. 144—155; Dobritzhofer, *Geschichte der Abiponer*, II. 239 ff., where he remarks how the missionaries went to work in order to express Christian ideas in foreign languages. Our age derives the strongest proof from the translations which have been made of the Bible by the Bible Societies into a multitude of languages used without the limits of Europe, and

§ 95. I do not think that any one will resort ultimately to the fact that Christianity has never yet been universal, and thence presume to draw the conclusion that it never can be. The obstacles which have hitherto opposed its universal extension may disappear. Indeed, the general connexion between all the nations of the earth which is expected to precede this event, seems, by the united influence of various causes, to be greatly advanced. Moreover, Christianity actually prevails among that portion of the human family which is the most distinguished for knowledge, riches, and power, and exerts a most decided influence upon all the other regions of the earth.

Let no one fear that this religion will be destroyed or even injured, should the new states of Europe which rise up before our eyes, rob her of all the external authority and civil power with which she has been invested under the old constitutions. She does not need this power in order to be preserved and enabled to exert her benevolent influence. She existed for three centuries and obtained firm footing in the best countries of the earth, without being the privileged religion of the state; and had she never been, men could never have made use of her as an instrument of oppression, as they have done. She would not have remained for centuries a degenerated superstition under the control of ambitious priests, who patronized her for the sake of their own advantage. It would not have cost so much labor and blood, as it ac-

which are constantly increasing in number; as one will readily perceive from reading the yearly reports of the Bible Society of Great Britain. Comp. *Die Thatigkeit der Britisch-Ausländischen Bibelgesellschaft zur Verbreitung der h. S. in den Ländern und Sprachen der verschiedenen Welttheile*, Hamburg, 1815. Hess, *Das Vorsehungsvolle der Bibelverbreitung*, S. 90 f.; [the History of the Origin and first ten years of the British and Foreign Bible Society. By the Rev. John Owen, N. Y. 1817; Tr.] and the various reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society, especially the last, or 25th, Appendix, p. 130 seq., Lond. 1829, at which place a survey is given of the languages and dialects into which the Bible has been either entirely or in part translated. The number is stated at 145, among which there are 62, into which the Bible had not been translated before the formation of this society.]

tually did, to purify her and restore her. She may therefore well be left to her own fate. She will sustain herself and make progress. Men will gradually come off from their hostility to her, when the storms of revolutions are allayed, and quiet reflection respecting her relations to the public weal, take the place of those passionate commotions, which have thus far overturned and destroyed every thing legitimate.* Besides, it was, as has been shown, not the wish nor the intention of Jesus, that the civil power should come with its despotic laws and authoritative decisions, to aid him in the execution of his plan. The proof, however, which we here wish to draw from the plan of Jesus would not be weakened in the least degree, should this plan never be carried into complete execution; provided, it is only certain that it is so formed as to contain nothing the execution of which is impossible.

And it seems to me, that this is perfectly clear from the foregoing considerations. The plan which Jesus devised for the general good, has nothing in it chimerical, extravagant, or impracticable. It is constructed in every respect with reference to the character and wants of human nature and the course of human affairs. It is the greatest and most exalted plan of which the human mind ever conceived.

II. JESUS THE GREATEST, MOST EXALTED OF MEN.

§ 96. But how great must that mind have been which devised it, and thus opened a way which no man had previously discovered! It is time for us to attend to this consideration and inquire, what kind of qualities a plan

* [What was here said by way of conjecture with reference to the overthrow of Christianity among the French, was soon after fulfilled. In the year 1797—98, the Theophilanthropical worship was yet in existence. In the year 1801, it was abolished and the Christian worship restored. Vid. Grégoire, *Geschichte des Theophilanthropismus*, in *Staudlin's Magazin für Religionsgeschichte*, IV. 257—401.]

of this character presupposes a soul to possess, and whether we are justified in thence concluding, that Jesus was the greatest and most exalted being that ever thought and acted upon earth.

§ 97. There are three kinds of qualities, which may authorize a human mind to claim the honor of a great mind. *First*, an extraordinary perfection of the intellectual faculties, and their cultivation and exercise in the acquisition of a knowledge of truth. It is not necessary that a mind have *all* these excellencies of the intellectual faculties, in order to be thus denominated. That mind is called great which possesses but one of them in a high degree. Such a mind is readily distinguished; for it goes to the utmost boundaries of human knowledge, and ventures out into every abyss in which the truth appears to be concealed. It does not confine itself to the few and imperfect notions with which common souls are satisfied, but it extends its inquiries to every thing within the grasp of reason and fills every chaos of intricate conceptions, with order and light. From a gentle hint of nature, of which an ordinary intellect would have taken no notice, it discovers the way into her deepest mysteries, and from every degree of experience, however small it may appear, draws a series of the most important conclusions. It not only has the clearest apprehension of the ultimate objects of every thought, effort, and operation, as bearing upon the true destination of rational existence, but in all cases makes them its own, and refers every thing to itself. Finally, under the guidance of such knowledge and sagacity, it projects the most exalted plans, ascertains the remotest effects of every cause, turns every thing to its own account, and while weaker minds, distributed to their posts, are exhausting their whole strength in the small and narrow sphere assigned to them, soars upward above them all, and, by a secret, invisible power, brings them to act in conformity to its own views, and by its superiority, induces thousands engaged in active combat with each other, to harmonize together, and at every step keeps the goal in view at which it aimed in the outset.

To an equal degree, however, *in the second place*, is our attention attracted and our admiration excited by strength of soul, and invincible power in a will, free and obedient to the calls of duty. We cannot refrain from pronouncing that mind great which we see acting in every thing that it does, with an energy and firm intention, with an effort and power, which increase with opposition, carry it boldly through every difficulty, and enable it to keep its original goal steadily in view. We are astonished at the constancy and unchangeable firmness with which a strong mind adheres to its purposes and pursues them, without being wearied with difficulties, deterred by dangers, hushed to sleep by the slow process of time, or discouraged by want of success. We are penetrated with the most profound respect, whenever we discover an incorruptible integrity, a self-control, which brings every inclination in subjection to the requisitions of law; and a faithful adherence to duty which cannot be made to quake or tremble at any thing on earth;—whenever we discover a strength of good will, which, in order to fulfil its obligations, disdains both injury and profit, and can neither be infatuated by cunning, nor conquered by power. We consider it a most exalted spectacle, and one that must fill every observer with admiration and reverence, to behold a great and virtuous man contending with opposing fate, and, though under its severest strokes, and in the midst of dangers, before which an ordinary man would tremble and flee away,—though deserted on every side, and without deliverance and without hope, yet always displaying that tranquillity of soul, that equanimity and presence of mind, that firm adherence to truth and rectitude, which were peculiar to him in propitious circumstances;—to behold a man whom the falling fabric of the universe may strike to the ground, but cannot make afraid. Spirits of such superiority and strength are certainly made for the purpose of exciting universal admiration, and we are inclined to recognise them as great, in proportion to the giddiness created by gazing at the dazzling height on which they stand.

But there is a *third* class of great minds which extort from us our admiration ; not by a power which humbles and depresses us, but one which fills our hearts with a confidence, a gratitude, and a love, towards them, which render the confession of their greatness, a delicious and most agreeable task. To this class belong those benefactors of mankind, whose excellence consists in an extensive benevolence, and an all-comprehensive goodness of heart ; whose most zealous, and whose ceaseless efforts are to enlighten, improve, save, and bless all around them ; who can even load an ungrateful world with benefits, and offer up their own lives for their enemies. We cannot avoid indeed being carried away with admiration and astonishment at the two first kinds of greatness when unaccompanied with this. Our humbled hearts, however, remain locked up and cold while we gaze upon them, or are filled with envy and aversion. Spirits of such a character we cannot love. As regards persons so dissimilar to us, we cannot feel that confident affection with which we are drawn out towards those in whom we discover philanthropical benevolence. Hence, this latter kind of greatness conquers every heart, and needs merely to be exhibited, in order, not only to be admired, but tenderly embraced and deeply respected by every one in whom all traits of feeling are not entirely extinct.

§ 98. But where is the human mind that has united these three kinds of greatness in itself ? Separately we often meet with them in different degrees and great varieties. History unquestionably furnishes us with spirits of penetrating sagacity ; men of unshaken firmness, and invincible courage ; philanthropists, gentle, tender, and full of an activity which springs from disinterestedness and magnanimity. Ordinarily, however, there exists but one kind of greatness, which has such a decided preponderance as to leave the others in no correct proportion, and of the last kind especially, the most distinguished men of antiquity are totally destitute. The plan devised by the founder of Christianity is a proof that these three kinds of greatness existed in the soul of its author in a harmony

and to a degree, of which there is no example in all history.

§ 99. The plan with which Jesus occupied himself, whether we look at its purport or its extent, was perfectly new, and one, of which no human being had ever had the least conception. Many plans had been formed before Christ for the improvement of single nations and states, and many efforts had been made to carry them into execution, but none of them struck deep enough. Their projectors satisfied themselves with checking the grossest abuses and disorders, and never thought of radically curing the evil in existence. The founder of Christianity alone reached an elevation to which no reformer before him had ever approached. He conceived the exalted, and, in the most appropriate sense of the word, the divine idea of in reality new creating and regenerating the whole human family. It was not his intention to attack a few vices, denounce a few abuses, and rectify here and there a disorder. It was his intention to create mankind anew, and stop up the very sources of wickedness. Think of the greatness presupposed in the formation of such a plan! No benefactor of mankind before Jesus, had ever observed how little could be accomplished by singly attacking the bad habits that prevailed, without striking at the root from which they sprung. Hence, he, who as a legislator or ruler, had to do with whole nations, satisfied himself with being able to produce and maintain external order among them; and he, who as a philosopher and moralist attempted to accomplish more, and endeavored to effect an internal reformation also, limited his efforts, and confined himself to the education of a few select disciples. Jesus possessed deeper, wider, and more correct views, than all the reformers that preceded him. He alone penetrated into the most secret wants of mankind and knew what was peculiarly needful for them. He alone commenced his reformation where it must be commenced, in order entirely to change the manner of thinking, willing, and perceiving, to which men have been accustomed. He alone extend-

ed his views over the whole human family and included all nations in his plan. He alone, with a superiority of mind, to which every thing that had previously been attempted for the welfare of the human race was far too small and defective, soared to an idea which contained the excellencies of all the plans which had ever been invented for the improvement of man,—to the idea of forming a new moral creation. Even here therefore we discover an acuteness, penetration, and extension of thought, which designate a most extraordinary mind.

And with what calmness, temperance, and moderation, did Jesus devise and prosecute this great and divine plan! Nothing is more common than for great men to be so animated and carried away with the beauty and excellence of an undertaking, as, in the midst of the enthusiasm thus enkindled, either not to perceive, or else to despise, the difficulties which oppose its accomplishment, and give themselves up too hastily to the influence of agreeable dreams. No traces of such precipitation, such want of correct judgement and cool reflection, are to be met with in Jesus. However adapted his plan was to inflame the imagination and heat it with beautiful and philanthropical dreams, it seems not to have produced such an effect upon him; for he always appeared entirely free from every wild and furious passion. He neither represented the execution of his plan as easier, nor its effects as more charming than they actually were, or might be. It was not the aim of Jesus all at once to transform the world into a paradise. He said nothing of a golden age about to commence. He did not encourage his friends with the hope of the easy advancement of their enterprises, nor promise them a quick and splendid victory. No, the whole of the immense project lay spread out before him with its innumerable difficulties, hindrances, exceptions, and dangers. He never anticipated any thing more respecting it, than was practicable according to the course and character of human affairs.

There is *one* circumstance worthy of *particular* notice in this place. Men, who occupy themselves with great

and ideal plans, and constantly live, as it were in futurity and the unlimited space of universality, are ordinarily extravagant beings, and, as regards the affairs of life, useless visionaries. They forget the relations which they actually sustain, overlook what lies near them, and, in their actions and the every day business of life, often violate the most common rules of prudence. In this respect also, the mind of Jesus is most advantageously distinguished from all others.

Notwithstanding the zeal with which he formed his great plan and kept it in view, he ever possessed a vivid sense of the circumstances in which he was placed among his people, and attended to the smaller matters intrusted to him, with as much practical wisdom, prudence, and reflection, as if he had thought of nothing else. He was as intimate and well acquainted with the moral and political constitution of his country, the inclinations, interests, and prejudices of all ranks and parties, all the dispositions, feelings, measures, and undertakings of enemies and friends, and the personal character of every one with whom he had to do, as if he had always confined his thoughts and observations to practical affairs, and made it his only business to study his condition, and acquire the knowledge of a man, who lived entirely for the circumstances in which he was placed. Accordingly, his mind embraced the whole, and viewed every thing upon a large scale. And yet nothing trifling escaped his notice, however insignificant. He was as capable of projecting a plan whose benevolent effects should extend from one end of the earth to the other, and render all mankind happy, as he was of composing the slightest difficulties among his pupils, and laboring with indescribable patience and forbearance in their education.

§ 100. The greatness of Christ's mind becomes still more apparent, however, when we take into consideration singly, the constituent parts of his plan. It was calculated principally, as has been shown, for the purpose of changing and improving *religion, morality, and society*. One is astonished to discover the view that he took of these

three things; to observe how minutely and correctly he understood what ought to be done for each of them; and finally, to reflect upon the facility and exalted simplicity, with which he brought about this improvement, and put an end to wants, for which multitudes of sagacious thinkers, by their various speculations, had sought to provide relief in vain. By abolishing the notions then prevalent respecting God, and substituting in their stead, one that represented him as a supreme father, filled with love to mankind, and educating them for morality and happiness, he freed religion at once, from the corruptions with which it had been disfigured, and imparted to it those excellencies which it ought to have. Before this representation, superstition of every kind, the grand cause of its obscurity, immediately vanished away. By this means, religion was changed from an immoral service, prompted by fear, into a worship of God in Spirit and in truth. It thus obtained a clearness and simplicity, which it had never before possessed, and became intelligible even to children in its most exalted dignity. Hitherto it had been an instrument of oppression, in the hands of ambitious priests, now it became an affair of the heart. Finally, by means of this representation, religion was transformed into a source of gentle consolation in all the adversities of life, and made in a convincing manner, to reveal an immortality.—With as much ease and great success, did he remedy the evils existing in morality. Here, every thing was reduced to active love to God and man. The law respecting this love was not treated by Jesus as a subordinate command, as it apparently was in the Mosaic code, but as the principle law, and one which comprehended all the rest. By means of this law, morality was brought into close and lasting connexion with religion, from which, it had hitherto been separated, both in theory and practice. In the same way also, it was secured as much against degradation and lax principles, as against extravagance and morose severity. It thus obtained an intelligibility and practicalness, and, at the same time, a kindness and warmth, calculated to render it universally efficacious. It was now

more than ever before, to model human nature, lead mankind on to the attainment of every kind of dignity, enjoyment and perfection, and by its friendly mediation bring the nations of the earth in closer connexion with each other.—In this way, also, preparation was made, for a radical improvement of the social relations among men. The wisest and greatest characters before Jesus, had felt the need of such improvement ; but as the means of effecting it, they thought only and that unanimously of changing the laws and introducing a new organization of states. Hence, under the influence of a kind of sunshine zeal, they wrote concerning the best forms and modifications of civil society, and drew up ideal constitutions. Even here, Jesus took his own, and indeed, the only right way. He alone commenced with the great truth, that while compulsory laws and political regulations may produce external propriety of conduct, they never can produce genuine morality. The latter however must exist, in order that civil society be prosperous. Accordingly, he kept his establishment entirely distinct from the affairs of the state. He began his measures with improving the individual and filling him with a real love of goodness, and felt certain that a state blessed with virtuous citizens, would prosper even with imperfect laws, and be able to provide a better constitution for itself without any violent concussion. It was not his object to improve the citizens by the state, but the state by the citizens.

He, who is acquainted with that part of antiquity before Jesus, and knows what its greatest men thought of religion, morality, and civil society, and what notions they had, respecting the relation of these things to each other, and what means they employed for purifying them and uniting them together, will be unable to deny, that what Jesus taught, contrived and accomplished in this respect, was new, peculiar to him alone, and directly opposed to the notions then prevalent. No one had contemplated these subjects in this point of view, or penetrated so far into their defects, and the wants of human nature in general. No one had been able to speak of them with such clearness, fa-

cility, and assurance, and reduce every thing to order. For many centuries since his age, reason has been thinking, exploring, and carrying on investigations, as far as it is possible to carry them ; but it has never yet been able to produce any thing better, more useful, or intelligible, respecting religion and morality, and the relation which they bear to civil society ; and whenever it has departed from the fundamental principles laid down by Jesus, it has inevitably fallen, either upon opinions prejudicial to truth, or upon precepts prejudicial to virtue. But what a mind must he have had, who thought and spoke about the most important and most exalted affairs of mankind, in so novel, so original, and so correct a manner ; with such penetrating sagacity, and yet so intelligibly ; who, in the modest and unpretending capacity of a popular teacher, delivered whatever is useful and true, for which speculation had searched the most secret depths in vain, and pointed out to human reason the results to which it must be brought by all its efforts, if it would refrain from embracing error !*

For Christ's object was, not to disturb reason in respect to its activity, but solely to guide it by the truths which he delivered as from God. Among all the positive religions of the world, there is none which favors genuine reflection ; which requires or compels the human mind to think for itself. All without exception set definite and arbitrary bounds to the spirit of investigation, and, in proportion as they engage in laying down precepts for practical life, require a blind obedience. Jesus, on the other hand, though he taught a religion, which contains every thing

* We may here adduce the testimony of a man, whom no one will pronounce partial in this case. "Je ne sais," says Rousseau in the *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*, p. 65, in the note, [Lettre 3me in the *Oeuvres Compl.*, Tom. XII. 72,] "pourquoi l'on veut attribuer au progrès de la philosophie la belle morale de nos livres. Cette morale, tirée de l'Evangile, était chrétienne, avant d'être philosophique — Les préceptes de Platon sont souvent très sublimes ; mais combien n'erre-t-il pas quelquefois, et jusqu'où ne vont pas ses erreurs ? Quant à Cicéron, peut on croire, que sans Platon ce Rhéteur eût trouvé ses Offices ? L'Evangile seul est, quand à la morale, toujours sûr, toujours vrai, toujours unique, et toujours semblable à lui-même."

requisite for man in any situation of life, taught nothing in stated rules; in precepts developed and established once for all; in a system of doctrines closed forever, and incapable of being farther reflected upon and modified, according to the necessities, knowledge, and progress, of each succeeding age. No; he imparted merely general doctrines, and useful principles, upon which human reason may labor in divers ways. He, who reflects upon these doctrines and knows how to develop the results of these principles, finds them to contain every thing that he needs, and to involve whatever is adapted to guide, improve, and comfort mankind and render them happy, in all possible circumstances. Of this guidance, however, this improvement, this comfort, this happiness, he can fully partake only when he exerts his reason, applies his religion with reflection, and makes its principles useful and valuable by freely following them. It was not the intention of Jesus to think as it were for mankind, and lay before them a connected series of rules and doctrines, which required solely to be committed to memory, and needed no farther reflection from his creatures. On the other hand, to practise and obey his religion was to constitute a powerful charm for human reason, a lasting, and healthful exercise.*

Consider also what a freedom from prejudice, what a knowledge of the human heart, what a survey of all the circumstances, conditions, and civil relations in which men are to be met with, was exhibited by Jesus in the directions

* [Baco, De Augment. Scient., lib. IX. c. 1. p. 598, ed. Amst., 1662, in 12, [Bacon's Works, Lond., 1824, Vol. VII. c. 1. p. 463; comp. also Wilson, On the Evidences of Christianity, Vol. II. Lect. XXI. p. 294. Lect XXIV. p. 324, Bost. 1830.] says very aptly: "*Christiana Fides*, ut in omnibus sic in hoc ipso eminet, quod auream servet mediocritatem, circa usum *rationis* et disputationis (quae rationis proles est) inter Leges Ethnicorum et Mahometi, quae extrema sectantur. Religio siquidem Ethnicorum, Fidei aut Confessionis constantis nihil habebat; contra in religione Mahometi, omnis disputatio interdicta est: ita, ut altera, erroris vagi et multiplicis; altera, vafrae cuiusdam et cautae imposturae faciem prae se ferat; cum sancta *Fides Christiana rationis* usum et disputationem (sed secundum debitos fines) et recipiat et reiiciat."]

which he gave his friends, respecting the extension of his doctrines, and in the means which he employed for carrying his plan into execution. In these respects also, he avoided all those by-paths into which the greatest geniuses before him, fell, and those of the present age do still fall, whenever they speak of effecting important improvements. How often has power been brought to the aid of virtue and truth, and made use of for the purpose of urging them upon the world. Jesus intended to avoid every thing that might have the appearance of constraint. Others, who perceive the unsuitableness of a compulsory mode of proceeding, think they may guide the world and render it happy, by the aid of secret associations, without being noticed. Even this means of doubtful propriety, Jesus treated with utter neglect. He intended to accomplish every thing that he did, in the most candid and open manner. It has been peculiar to the founders of religions almost universally to fall into the mistake of forming regulations, instituting ceremonies, and laying down positive precepts, which will not admit of being observed every where. In this way they have proved beyond question, that they were confined to limited spheres, and had but little acquaintance with the circumstances of different nations, and the characters of their respective countries. In this respect also Jesus conducted with a wisdom that took a survey of every thing. His religion contains absolutely nothing which cannot be practised every where.

§ 101. But what shall we think, what conception form of the greatness of a mind that boldly worked its way through the thickest darkness of false opinions and superstitious prejudices in which his age was enveloped ; out of a multitude of follies and dreams, selected the most useful of every thing that had ever been uttered by man respecting the worship of God and true happiness ; and not only purified it and supplied its defects, but represented it with a clearness and simplicity, a brevity and definiteness, in which it proves amply sufficient for the strongest, without becoming burdensome to the weakest ; in which

it may serve as a safe guide to the most acute thinkers in all the labyrinths of speculation, while it constitutes a perfectly plain, and intelligible system of rules for the most unpractised, if honest enough to obey it, as far as they comprehend it? Let the man be named who has embraced so much, penetrated through so much, accomplished so much;—who, let it be well considered, has fixed the principles of religion and morality, which, notwithstanding all the progress made by the human mind, all the discoveries that have enlarged the boundaries of its knowledge, and all the favorable changes that have taken place in the other parts of science, ever remain equally authentic, useful, and certain, and must always be recognised as the only sure foundation of human perfection. Let the man be named, who accomplished all this, and that too, in an age in which most intellects had just begun to think and examine for themselves, and under circumstances, which, as I shall show farther on, would naturally have confined the mind of Jesus in the fetters of ignorance and prejudice. Any one, who would avoid partiality, and not rashly contradict the testimony of history, must admit, that the founder of Christianity, even in respect to his *intellectual greatness*, was without precedent, and far excelled all who had ever thought upon earth.

But he was not merely the greatest thinker. He did not, as other spirits of this kind so often do, give himself up to idle speculations, and project plans, without any serious intention of ever carrying them into execution. In his plan, he also exhibited a *strength* of soul, a *power over his will*, free as it was, and obedient to the calls of duty, which equally entitle him to the name of the most exalted and most extraordinary of men. His plan was unquestionably the greatest of which a human mind had ever conceived. On this very account indeed, its execution was necessarily to be connected with more difficulties, than had attended that of any other plan. Jesus had a full view of all these difficulties. He spoke of them with sufficient frequency, and in so doing, proved that he felt how much he had to contend with. He knew that it would require centuries

to carry his plan into execution ; and that almost innumerable obstacles would be interposed in its way, in the very out-set, by the attachment of the Jews to the religious regulations of Moses ; by the superstition of Heathenism, supported and defended as it was, by the fearful power of the Roman kingdom ; and especially, by the unheard of moral corruption then prevalent in the world. In face of all these difficulties, however, he had courage enough to cherish the thought of reforming this corrupt world, firmly resolve to do so, and enter upon its immediate execution.

This execution itself was at the very commencement of the undertaking a very difficult one. He met with opposition at every step. He had to contend with the prejudices and shocking ignorance of his people, with a stubbornness and wickedness altogether peculiar to them, with the greatest poverty, so that he was often destitute of the necessaries of life, and with the hatred of the magistrates, who every where laid snares for him, and sought to effect his destruction ; and yet nothing caused him to shrink back, or allayed his courage. Every day's experience forced upon him the conviction, that his doctrines, admonitions, warnings, and prayers, were of little avail. Not even the few friends whom he had selected, and was carefully exerting every effort to educate, would lay aside their own prejudices, and learn to adopt new dispositions, views, and opinions. With the great mass of the people, his success in this respect was far less. They were too fanatical as a nation, too full of prejudice, too mighty in superstition, and too fiery and powerful in its defence. It was impossible for him therefore, with all the personal sacrifice of strength, convenience and repose, to which he subjected himself, to accomplish any thing considerable among them, and almost all his efforts were in vain. And yet this man, unable to succeed as he was in his own little and despicable country, and carry his plan into operation to any great degree, had strength of mind enough to extend it to all nations, and speak of its success with a conviction and confidence, which ad-

mitted not of doubt or uncertainty. Indeed his courage appeared to increase in proportion to the difficulties and hindrances which he met with,* and when his disciples informed him, that, notwithstanding his multiplied efforts, he had failed to obtain any victory over the prejudices of his countrymen, he assured them in the most positive manner, that he would nevertheless found a church which should bid defiance to the gates of Hell and endure forever, Matt. 16: 13—18. What other man has ever evinced such resolution in the midst of the most adverse circumstances, labored with such ceaseless activity for the accomplishment of an object to all appearance unattainable, and yielded such unconditional obedience to a command of duty which bore all the marks of being useless and extravagant?

There is an additional circumstance in this place worthy of particular attention. The founder of Christianity knew that he was soon to *be seized, and put to death*. The activity with which he commenced the execution of his plan was to be interrupted, and that too, before any thing considerable had been accomplished. At the same time, he looked upon death as the most fearful change a man can undergo, and was not ashamed to exhibit that anxiety, which every human being feels on the approach of his dissolution. Indeed, he was very powerfully affected with horror, and very far removed from that indifference to death and that defiance of it, which was so much extolled by the ancients, though at the foundation, nothing more than a despair under the appearance of an heroic presence of mind. Ought not the circumstance, that he was soon to leave human society, and the fear with which he looked forward to this change, to have banished from his mind every thought respecting this immense plan, and have filled him with despondency? But exactly the reverse were their effects. Jesus never adhered to his plan with more firmness, nor felt more internally convinced that it would be carried into universal

* “Non est vir fortis et strenuus, qui laborem fugit; verum ubi crescit illi animus ipsa rerum difficultate.” Seneca, Ep. XII.

execution, than at the very moment of his death. This moment in other cases annihilates all human plans. Here the strongest minds relinquish every thing, and consider themselves at the end of their enterprises and labors. Not so with Jesus. He was most confidently assured that what he had begun would be accomplished, and that death would not frustrate his intentions. Shortly before his passion, a woman impressed with a reverence towards him, poured out a vase full of precious ointment upon him while at a repast, when he took occasion to observe, that he then stood upon the borders of the grave, and that she in so doing, had, as it were, embalmed a corpse; and though there was then nothing more probable than that his enterprises would perish with his death, yet he added, in a manner indicative of the greatest confidence and the most comforting conviction, that his doctrines would certainly be extended every where, and even the recollection of this small circumstance be preserved to the latest generations, Matt. 29: 12, 13. Such courage and firmness in regard to a plan in compass and importance, manifestly the greatest that can be conceived of, is so extraordinary, and so superior to every thing that has yet been discovered in the most resolute men, as to be altogether without precedent.

And in regard to it there is no room for any one to suspect the existence of enthusiasm. Could that man possibly have been enthusiastic, whose thoughts were deeper, clearer, stronger, and more correct than those of any other human mind? Who, that is acquainted with human nature, can conceive of enthusiasm and enlightened reason's being united together in the same person? * Enthusiasts are distinguished for exhibiting a defiance in view of death, a stiff and unnatural insensibility. In Jesus, as has already been observed, we discover nothing of this. On the other hand, after having overcome the strong natural aversion which every uncorrupted man must feel to

* Comp. the excellent remarks which Eberhard puts into the mouth of his Amyntor upon this subject, S. 229 f.

death,* he was so calm, so attentive to every thing which happened to him, so circumspect in regard to every step he took, and so self-collected amid all the abuses heaped upon him, as clearly to evince, that his firmness originated in rational principles and a voluntary obedience to the calls of duty, Matt. 26: 51—54. "We may assert," says Origen, "that the mere silence maintained by Jesus, while under the scourge, and amidst the numerous torments inflicted upon him, displayed more bravery and strength in suffering, than all that the Grecian heroes ever said when in similar circumstances." The courage there-

* The suspicion which is expressed on the 118th page of Bahrdt's Uebersetzung des Neuen Testamentes, that the anxious struggle which Jesus passed through on the Mount of Olives, originated in the uncertainty in which he found himself as to the result of his career, is evidently unfounded. *He may even then have entertained the hope of effecting his escape in the night, and finding an opportunity to advance his object in silence.* And yet he had often foretold of his death, and only a few hours before this scene of suffering, had pointed it out in the most definite manner; and he might even then have effected his escape with perfect ease, had he been disposed to do so. —*He may not have expected to be formally arrested by the magistrates, but have been looking for a secret and arbitrary surprisal from his enemies.* And yet, he must for a long time have known that he was to be betrayed to the rulers; and that in their official capacity they were seeking after his life;—indeed, while in Galilee, he had foretold, that they should deliver him to the Romans to be put to death, Matt. 20: 17—19. Mark 10: 32—34. But for what purpose is all this? Jesus had too often expressed a living conviction, that even his death would not prove in any respect detrimental to his great undertaking, and too accurately foretold every thing that was to happen to him, to be under the control of a timid uncertainty respecting his fate at this time, when every thing was taking place in exact accordance with his prophecies. His very prayer, *O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!* affords ample proof that he was at this time in certain expectation of death, though as the terrific event drew near, he was unable entirely to suppress the feelings of nature that arose within him. And yet the cup for whose passing away he prayed, was, perhaps, not the *torturing death* at hand, for he had evidently formed a considerate and unchangeable resolution to submit to this, but merely the *racking pains* which had then seized upon him, and proceeded more from the trembling machine of the body than the infirmity of the mind. [Vid. the author's Opusc. Acad. II. 55. Such is Origen's explanation, De Martyrio, c. 29, and contra Cels. II. Opp. I. 292. 410, de la Rue.] He was anxious for the restoration of his former undisturbed self-possession, in order that he might be able to take the important step before him with all

fore which shone forth from all his conduct,* and was clearly exhibited in his projecting this great plan, and what he did to carry it into execution, is, on the one hand, unexampled, and exceedingly great; for no man ever struggled with the burden of such an immense undertaking; on the other, it was altogether rational, of the noblest character, and perfectly subjected to the calls of duty; for he manifestly grounded it upon the conviction that his was the plan of God, who by means of it, intended to ennoble mankind and render them happy, and that to give it up through timidity would be to betray the cause of God, and become unfaithful to one of the most exalted purposes to which one can be destined. Considered in this point of view, therefore, Jesus is also *the greatest of men*.

§ 102. But that he was also the greatest of men in respect to *benevolence* and *goodness of heart*, is beyond all doubt. Such a benevolence as that which he exhibited is no where to be met with in history. The most exalted

the reflection and collection of mind requisite for the purpose. Besides, the tenderness with which Jesus loved his life, and the deep, internal susceptibility, for which his philanthropical character was in every respect so conspicuous, afford a sufficient solution of the painful struggle which he passed through on the Mount of Olives, and give the spirit and manly firmness with which he triumphed over all fear of death, a worth and greatness with which the stoical apathy, and fool-hardy inconsiderateness of rough men, who, without any reflection, rush into the very jaws of death, cannot in any respect be compared. [In precisely the same way judged Voltaire, *Traité sur la Tolerance*, Oeuvres, ed. des Deuxp. Tom. 40. p. 340 s. "Si Jesus Christ sembla craindre la mort, si l'angoisse qu'il ressentit fut si extrême, qu'il en eut une sueur mêlée de sang, ce qui est le symptôme le plus violent et le plus rare, c'est qu'il daigna s'abaisser à toute la faiblesse du corps humain, qu'il avait revêtu. Son corps tremblait et son ame était inébranlable; il nous apprenait, que la vraie force, la vraie grandeur consistent à supporter des maux, sous lesquels notre nature succombe. Il y a un extrême courage à courir à la mort en la redoutant." In like manner also Theodorus Mopsvest., *Contra Julianum in Fragmentis PP. Graecor.*, ed. Münter, I. 123; and the same remark is made respecting the apostle Paul by Chrysostom, *Hom. 6.*, in *S. Paulum*, Opp. ed. Montf. Tom. II. 507 seq.]

† *Contra Celsum*, l. VII. p. 369; [p. 733, de la Rue,] and Eberhard's *Amyntor*, S. 237, 238.

spirits of antiquity were deficient in nothing so much as a benevolent extension of thought. We have already been compelled to remark, that the whole of antiquity was disfigured with a certain want of humanity. Here we find the opposite. The founder of Christianity in the formation of his plan unveiled a goodness of heart, a philanthropical benevolence of boundless extent, and absolutely unique in its kind. No human mind, before or since, has approximated so near to the Deity, or soared so near to his high and perfect pattern of holy goodness, and all comprehensive love, as Jesus did. His love, like that of the great Creator, which flows forth in constant and boundless streams of kindness to every being, flowed forth to all mankind, and aimed to make them all happy without exception. Come ye, who dare despise the founder of Christianity, and perhaps even revile his name, come gaze awhile with steady aspect upon this picture. It is one that should thrill you with admiration ! The heart which you misapprehend is the purest, noblest, tenderest, most benevolent, that ever beat for the welfare of others. He whom you calumniate and contemn, is the most zealous, universal, and venerable saviour and friend that can be named by our race. Is it rational, is it noble and just, to rail at those dispositions and feelings which ought to be an object of the deepest, most respectful attention, and the tenderest emotions of gratitude, even if unaccompanied with any results, and ending in fruitless efforts and a useless exhibition of kindness ?

This goodness of heart, this unlimited philanthropy, is also the chief subject of his instruction, and constitutes the foundation of all his precepts. No one can be called his disciple, who has not advanced so far in this benevolence, that he is able to love even his enemy ; to bless those who curse him, do good to those who offend him, and pray to God for those who persecute him. The man, who desires to become his follower, must be merciful as the Father in heaven is merciful, and exert himself to extend goodness, prosperity, and joy around him on every side. He must spend his strength for the welfare of others, and alleviate

every human want ; with his property feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, and clothe the naked ; must shed his blood in the cause of truth and rectitude ; relinquish all personal advantage to promote universal happiness ; sacrifice every thing to enlighten, improve, and beatify others, and if duty requires it, offer up his life for an ungrateful world. All this must every one be able to do who follows his system of instruction ; such were the dispositions which he sought every where to awake and strengthen, and which he himself exhibited in the most perfect and touching manner. And now let the wise man be named whose doctrines breathe such love ; whose precepts and actions came forth from a heart of such enlargement, and originated in a zeal so pure and disinterested in advancing the cause of universal happiness and improvement.

And finally, the life of Jesus !—It may be described in a few words ; *he went about doing good*. His zeal to bring into circulation the better information and knowledge which he came to impart, was unwearied. He denied himself every convenience and comfort, when by so doing he could accomplish any thing good in respect to a single soul, or alleviate any sufferer of his pain. In his intercourse with the world he was neither dark, morose, nor reserved. He caused no one to feel his superiority and greatness, in a manner calculated to humble and depress. Full of open-hearted friendship, he shared in festive joys and innocent pleasures, and the severity of his seriousness was softened by a love of the mildest character which filled every uncorrupted heart with reverence and confidence. According to the testimony of history, all reformers have been distinguished in their morals and conduct, by a certain inflexibility and hardness, a certain wild severity and stormy vehemence, and it is easy to bring reasons to show why those, who, under the influence of a kind of superiority, undertook to renovate the ages in which they lived, and produce an entire change, must have possessed this irresistible firmness, this decisive and authoritative energy. Even here, however, Jesus constitutes a remarkable exception. He, the greatest of all

reformers, was a man of the most gentle manners and the mildest habits, and not a trace of turbulent zeal, blustering impetuosity, and unfeeling severity, is to be discovered either in his disposition or his actions. In this respect, also, he is unique and unexampled. For every thing which he did, had a reference to the welfare of others. He was full of condescension and meekness towards every man, and never excited, except when compassion for the incorrigible drew tears into his eyes, and unheard of wickedness constrained him to foretell the unhappy consequences which always flow from the practice of vice. And now, who, that is acquainted with the nation, fanatical, rough, vicious, and indocile, towards which he exhibited such love and forbearance; who, that knows the danger with which he was daily threatened, and the snares laid with so much art to entrap him; who, that reflects upon the ingratitude with which he was treated, the contempt with which his most benevolent deeds were repelled, and the most honest dispositions and feelings of his heart, calumniated; who, that calls to mind the agonies with which he was ultimately put to death, and the insulting manner in which his benevolence was recompensed;—who, I say, that reflects upon all this, will feel competent to measure the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of that love, which offered itself in sacrifice for such a people; which dissolved in tears over calamities about to come upon such enemies; and, in the midst of the most inhuman torments a man can suffer, when the racked spirit always has enough to do with itself, and forgets all external objects, could yet by a prayer full of meekness and pardon, seek to mitigate the sentence which divine justice would unavoidably inflict upon such criminals?

§ 103. Here, therefore, every thing is unprecedented. Here we discover a wisdom which embraced every thing, and penetrated through every thing, as regards the human intellect, of the greatest difficulty and importance; a firmness and strength of soul, such as no hero ever exhibited; and, in addition thereto, a meekness and love.

which flowed forth to all, and aimed to promote the happiness of mankind at large. In whom have these qualities, each of which is sufficient of itself alone to entitle one to the rank of a great man, ever been united together; in whom, to the degree in which they are to be met with here? What human being has ever possessed them in that celestial harmony in which they must have existed in Jesus, in order to enable him to devise the great plan for which, as the founder of Christianity, he is distinguished? His wisdom was not inactive and dead; an empty sagacity, which was absorbed in subtle speculations. Under the direction of benevolence, and a zeal in the performance of duty, it was actively and usefully employed in promoting the general good. The fire and heroic strength of his soul, however great, did not break wildly forth and excite commotions and wars. They were under the influence of wisdom and love, and became a blessing to the world. Finally, his love was not an effeminate feeling, a good-natured disposition, perhaps the result of a delicate organization or happy temperament; on the other hand, it existed in connexion with the most enlightened reason, and the most manly courage. Should any one form a conception of the *highest human greatness*, it must be admitted that *these would constitute its traits*. According to the plan which Jesus formed for the good of the world, these qualities all existed in his soul. He was therefore unquestionably the *greatest man* that ever thought and acted upon earth.*

III. JESUS AN EXTRAORDINARY TEACHER SENT OF God.

§ 104. Now if we can shew that these qualities were developed in a way altogether incomprehensible to us, and according to laws entirely different from those under which great minds are usually formed; that it is impossi-

* Si quis videt hanc faciem, altiore fulgentioreque, quam cerni inter humana consuevit: nonne velut *numinis* occursum obstupescit resistat, et ut fas sit vidisse, tacitus precetur? Seneca, Ep. CXV.

ble to see how the founder of Christianity, in the circumstances in which he lived, could have attained to that elevation on which he was so far exalted above every thing that is great among men, inasmuch as those circumstances were directly calculated to smother the growth of his mind and heart, as it were, in the very bud ; and finally, that no rational explanation can be given of this wonderful phenomenon, except by the admission of a divine influence in the case, altogether peculiar ; then we shall be authorized to draw the conclusion, that the founder of Christianity is to be considered as an *extraordinary and divine teacher!*

When the faculties of a human mind are said to develop themselves, it creates no astonishment. Every thing is effected according to definite laws, and with these we have been made acquainted by experience. The most excellent powers of a human mind may be suppressed, or prevented from arriving to any great degree of maturity, if external circumstances render their cultivation difficult, or lay mighty obstacles in its way. It is well known, that much depends upon, in what nation, at what time, in what region, and under what circumstances, advantages and encouragements, a mind is reared. A man of the most capable mind will either remain inactive and perform nothing, or hardly rise above mediocrity, if he lives among ignorant and barbarous people ; if these people are blinded by pernicious prejudices ; if he is prohibited by the state of things from seeking better nourishment for his intellect among foreign nations ; if personal circumstances compress him and impede his progress ; and if he is obliged to struggle at every step, with loads of poverty, obscurity, and contempt. The very strongest powers are unequal to so many difficulties. Confined on every side, and, by a perpetual counteraction, incapacitated for developing, strengthening, and extending its faculties, the mind will, as it were, prey upon itself, and never be able to produce any considerable effect. And admitting that external difficulties are not altogether of so injurious a character ; if a man is not an excellent genius and by nature capable of every thing that is great, at least in possession of excit-

ing examples, every kind of instruction, and teachers, to impart to him sound knowledge and information ; if he is left without guidance, altogether to himself ; if he is to draw entirely from his own resources and make his own discoveries ; if he is to remove every obstruction by his own arm and mount every height without the assistance of a director ; how will it be possible for him ever to attain to even a moderate degree of perfection ? Under a sky so extremely rough, in a soil so very barren, no human intellect can flourish ; at most, only that of the poet or the hero : for nature alone is every where sufficient for the development of the powers which here come into consideration ; and although, under the influence of advantageous connexions, a mind of this class would arrive at a still greater degree of perfection, yet from the past we learn that even barbarous nations have had courageous heroes and fiery poets. No other kind of greatness, however, is attainable under such circumstances ; and least of all, that which consists in a clear knowledge of truth, extensive goodness of heart, and genuine, moral benevolence. Those who are to be distinguished in this way, must not only possess excellent talents, but be instructed, allured by external inducements, carefully cherished, and wisely directed. What Plutarch has said upon this subject will always remain true : that the best natural parts without education, and labor for accomplishing the end, will resemble a fruitful soil, which, notwithstanding much that is good and useful, bears many poisonous weeds, because it has never been cultivated with diligence and care.*—It is indeed the character of a great mind, as such, to break through by force, overcome every difficulty, and press forward to the goal of its destination with a vehemence which cannot be retarded or extinguished ; but then we shall always be able, even in this case, to discover the way which it took. In the end we shall find that it was allured onward and put into operation by certain favorable circumstances, and that, notwith-

* In *Coriolano*, p. 214. [Xyl. Reisk. Vol. II. 86.]

standing the various obstacles which appeared to oppress it and oppose its progress, it enjoyed various facilities, opportunities, and helps, by which it was sustained, directed, and preserved in untiring zeal. On the other hand, let every thing combine together against a mind, if, nevertheless, it should soar to a distinguished greatness, it must be in opposition to the ordinary laws of nature, and, of course, it must excite admiration.

And this appears to have been the case in regard to the founder of Christianity. We have seen, that in the formation of his plan he exhibited a greatness of mind, to be met with no where else, and that hence, he must unquestionably be called the most extraordinary of men, or be treated with the greatest injustice. If therefore we were unacquainted with his history, we should suppose that he was educated under the most favorable circumstances, which ever combined together for the development of a human mind. It is well known, however, that exactly the reverse is true, and that every thing, as it were, combined to crush down the founder of Christianity in all his efforts to rise, and seemed forever to prohibit him from leaving a state of obscurity, and soaring above the great mass of common and every-day men.

§ 105. Let us be cautious, however, in regard to this subject, and in a matter of such importance, not draw a hasty conclusion. Is it then in reality as certain as commonly supposed, that the circumstances in which Jesus lived, were altogether of an adverse character? It cannot be denied that we are totally ignorant of Christ's youth. The credible accounts given of his life, by his friends, are almost entirely confined to the few years which he spent as a teacher of his people, and leave the occurrences of his youth in the greatest obscurity. From this lack of information, however, shall we be authorized directly to infer, that during the time of which so little is known, there was no favorable combination of circumstances, no convenient and natural way by means of which, divine Providence might have led Jesus on to the attainment of that high degree of excellence manifest in his

character, without the aid of a miracle? From the perfect silence of the Evangelists respecting the early years of Jesus, evidently, only thus much follows, that we are unable to specify the natural causes, by which his extraordinary faculties were awakened, stimulated and elevated. This great deficiency in the history, does indeed deprive us of a splendid spectacle, and prevent us from being able to follow Jesus with an exploring glance through the whole course through which God led him in order to make him a teacher of the world, and the most distinguished benefactor of mankind. But who would therefore assert that he had no such course, and that divine wisdom could not have ordered circumstances, as they must have been, if exactly the character which has been described, was to be produced according to the ordinary laws of the human mind? And would Jesus be as deserving of all our reverence and gratitude, all our admiration and love as he in reality is, if God had made him what he was by a miracle of his almighty power? Could we by way of merit, impute to him that all comprehensive wisdom, that inimitable resolution, that tender love and magnanimous devotion of himself to the welfare of mankind, as we are inclined to do, if assured that these excellencies were not acquired by his own exertions, but originated in the efficacious and irresistible power of God? Besides, do not the authors of his history give us to understand, that he was formed by degrees, and under a variety of inducements and favorable circumstances, like any other man? For what else can be the signification of the expressions, that he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man, Luke 2: 40, 52, than that his excellent powers and talents were progressively developed and gradually brought into exercise? especially so, as the very same modes of expression are used of John the Baptist, Luke 1: 80. For any one therefore who would give a natural account of the origin of the great qualities which Jesus possessed, and render it intelligible, nothing farther appears to be requisite than in this great historical deficiency, to avail himself of such hints as have been preserved,

and ground upon them a natural assemblage of causes, by means of which, Jesus, in connection with the uncommon parts of intellect and heart that he possessed, must have become what he was. If such suppositions contain nothing that is opposed to the well known history of those times, the mode of thinking then prevalent, the ordinary course of events, and the laws by which the human mind is governed in its operations, then they may compensate for the want of historical information, supply the great defects of Christ's history, and convince us that there is no need of admitting the agency of any thing supernatural or miraculous in the formation of this wonderful man.

It will be readily understood, that I here use the words of an author, who, in a well known work,* has, of late, not only attacked the idea that Jesus was educated in an uncommon and supernatural way and the reasons which I have now brought forward in its support, but has presumed to fabricate a connexion of circumstances and events by which Jesus may have been led on to the attainment of the exalted perfections, which, from the examination that we have given his great and benevolent plan, he seems to have possessed. It would be unjust not to confess that this writer has exhibited much sagacity and excellent talents in the manner in which he has dressed up his hypothesis, and endeavored to procure for it, the approbation of his readers. But do his explanations render every thing so intelligible, and so far dispel and annihilate all appearance of the miraculous and extraordinary, that we cannot any longer be justified in going on to perfect the conclusion at which we were aiming, and infer, that as the mind of Jesus was not developed according to the laws by which minds are usually governed, he must have been made a benefactor of mankind by an uncommon and especial influence of the Deity? I can not think so by any means. This is not the place indeed for me to prove what I believe in this respect in detail, and enter upon a close examination of the several assertions and fictitious representations

* Comp. the Briefe über die Bibel im Volkston.

of that author. The few considerations which follow will suffice to show, that we are still authorized to admit the agency of such causes in the formation of Christ's character as cannot be observed in the ordinary course of things, and justify us in the conclusion which we wish hereafter to make.

§ 106. In the *first place* then, the meaning of the question of which I here speak, is not, whether, considered in general, it is possible for divine wisdom to project a connexion of circumstances, and arrange a series of natural causes by the operation of which, according to the general laws of the human mind, such a character could be developed as Christ's was. Left in this indefinite state, no one will wish to deny it; for who would not in general admit it to be possible for divine wisdom and power to operate by any means and arrangements which do not involve a contradiction? But, as has been said, this is not the present subject of inquiry. The question before us is, whether, considering the individual circumstances and relations in which Jesus lived, ordinary causes could have produced as great effects as they must have done, in order to the formation of his mind. In the case before us, therefore, we are not to enter upon the examination of a general possibility, but the explanation of a matter of fact, which, so far as it is made known to us by the incidents related in history, assumes a definite form, and must be clearly confined to the limits affixed to it, by the connexion then actually existing between things.

It is farther to be considered, that he who asserts the agency of something extraordinary, wonderful, supernatural, in the education of Jesus, does not in so doing, assume an immediate, and irresistible agency of God himself. What we call supernatural and wonderful in this case, is to be understood of the mode of education, and implies nothing more than an unquestionable exception to what can be effected by natural causes, so far as we know them and have learned their power from experience. The modest thinker will never presume to declare any effect of so extraordinary a character as necessarily to re-

quire God to have produced it by his own immediate operations to the entire exclusion of mediate causes; for to whom has nature revealed all her secrets? To whom has God unlocked the great machinery of the universe? Who is so accurately acquainted with all its springs, and has so perfectly calculated all its moving forces, as to be able to say with regard to every thing, with positive certainty, thus far the power of nature extends, and here her forces are exhausted? Here the hand of the Almighty is apparent; here his arm produces immediate effects! For the present, therefore, the particular manner in which the great qualities which make up the character of Jesus, were developed, may be considered as uncertain, and consequently it may be left undetermined, whether Jesus was formed directly by God himself, or through the intervention of secret, and, to us, unknown, mediate causes. In this respect, every person may be left to investigate for himself, and follow his own convictions; for who has a right to complain of any one for searching after the natural means, which divine Providence may have employed in order to make Jesus the greatest benefactor of mankind, provided he does it with becoming modesty and reverence? If, however, such investigations result in showing, that all the advantages which Jesus actually enjoyed, according to the testimony of history, or may be supposed to have enjoyed with some appearance of probability, come far short of solving the riddle, how he could have attained to an elevation so superior and unlike to that of the greatest men before him, then we shall evidently be justified in considering the formation and perfection of his great mind as something wonderful, and the unexplained effect of a higher wisdom and power.

§ 107. Now therefore we have only to ask whether the author quoted, who has presumed to attempt an explanation of the entire formation of Christ's character, by means of ordinary causes, has been able to discover favorable circumstances enough in the connexions of Jesus, to justify us in pronouncing so extraordinary a phenomenon, a natural one;—whether, moreover, he has not attributed

more influence and power to these circumstances than they could have had in the natural way ;—and finally, whether he has been sufficiently candid in pointing out the obstacles which must have opposed and impeded the development of Christ's faculties, and whether he has ascribed to them that counteracting tendency which they actually possessed. Should his explanation prove deficient in only one of these respects, it would fail to satisfy every impartial inquirer acquainted with the human mind and its laws of operation. Now, how much soever attention this writer has paid to every little circumstance of history which might be rendered useful in support of his opinion, and how much soever eloquence and art he has exhibited in the fabrication and representation of his fictions, he seems not to have satisfactorily answered the one or the other of these inquiries, but in reality to have left all three of them in an imperfect state.

For what are the advantageous inducements, under the influence of which, the mind of Jesus is said to have arisen to the attainment of a greatness that has not its like in history? All that the fertile imagination of the author has been able to invent are opportunities to form an acquaintance with the Grecian Jews, with enlightened men among the priests, and with heathen writers.* Now how many thousands of excellent geniuses there may have been at the time of Jesus, who had all these opportunities, and might have used them with far more freedom and far less disturbance than he, and yet never arose above ordinary men, nor once approached that greatness to which Jesus attained? Can we consent to look upon such common and ordinary causes as sufficient for the production of an effect which is altogether uncommon, and in its kind, unique and unexampled? The author would have had trouble enough in accounting for the origin of the extraordinary perfections which Jesus possessed, in an intelligible manner, with ample permission to give him a better country, locate him among an enlighten-

* Vid. S. 335, of the letters above quoted.

ed people, and bring all the most favorable circumstances at once to bear upon him, which ever combined together for the production of a human mind ; and shall we be persuaded to believe that these few, and in every respect, common advantages are sufficient for the purpose? If for a moment we suppose so, it is evident that the author, in bringing the mind of Jesus to the perfection which under the influence of these causes, it is said to have obtained, must cause it to have taken such huge steps in its progress, as with all his pretended explanations, to leave the thing involved in all the incomprehensibility and wonderfulness which he intended to remove or avoid.

But are the circumstances to which he alludes and attributes so much power in the formation of Christ's character, historically considered, in reality so probable, that we can admit them as causes to have had an agency in this important affair? No one will think of denying the possibility of Christ's having been acquainted and familiar with the Grecian, and especially the Egyptian Jews. It is worthy of remark, however, that in the credible accounts left us of his life, not the least trace of such acquaintance is any where to be met with, and that Jesus intentionally avoided intercourse with the Grecian Jews, the only time in which we are informed, John 12: 20 seqq. of their ever having evinced a desire to speak with him. Besides, it is not easy to see what Jesus could have gained by such intercourse. However flourishing the condition of learning at Alexandria under the Ptolemies, the form and character which it had assumed there, would have led Jesus directly away from what he was, and was to become. According to the testimony of history, the Alexandrian scholars were characterized by a love for a useless polymathy, a laborious diligence in learned play-work, a taste for close and subtile meditations, an inclination for a mystical philosophy wrapt up in enthusiasm and superstition, a kind of disposition for trifles, and a decided propensity for a life of idleness, and voluptuous ease.* Jesus, therefore, must have favored these things,

* Vid. Heyne's treatise, *De genio seculi Ptolemaeorum*, in the

had he received his education from Alexandrian teachers. But in this way would he not have been made exactly the reverse of what he was, and was to become?

And with what degree of probability can we suppose that there were men among the Jewish priests of that age who could have contributed any thing for the purpose of forming such a mind as Christ's was? They were either Pharisees, Sadducees, or ignorant, sacrificing priests. Now it is well known how much the doctrines and designs of Jesus were opposed to the main positions of these parties, how much he differed from them in his fundamental views, and how useless it is to examine him in order to find the least trace of that influence which their instruction may have left in his mind. In saying this, I do not deny that there may have been many excellent, thinking men, among this great multitude of priests, who were free from many pernicious prejudices. But how did the poor and lowly Jesus, blessed with few favorable connexions, happen to light upon these choice and excellent men, who, if he ever found them, could not have led him to a point beyond that at which they themselves had arrived, and hence, were unable to say any thing to him respecting the chief matter of his great plan? That Jesus could not have been indebted to the Essenes in any respect for his education, admitting it possible for him to have been led astray by them, is proved beyond question by the fact, that the recluse principles of this party and his plan were directly at variance.* And that no one can resort in this case to a secret society of wise men which may have existed and in whose bosom and by whose aid and support, Jesus may have found access to sources of knowledge unknown to the rest of the world has already been shown so clearly as hardly to

Opusc. acad., T. I. 76—134. [Neander's K. G., I. 1. 60—87. Strauss's Helons Wallfahrt nach Jerusalem, Elberfeld, 4 Bde. 1820 ff., also contains much that is excellent relative to this subject;] [Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. A Picture of Judaism in the Century which preceded the advent of our Saviour. Translated from the German of F. Strauss, in 2 Vols., Boston, 1825. Tr.]

* With what is here said and that also on pp. 89, 90, respecting the Essenes, compare Appendix E.

admit of a doubt. We have seen that not the least trace of any thing of the kind is to be discovered in all history.

Finally, books of heathen writers may possibly have been found in Galilee, as many of the heathen lived in that region. Here our author, owing to the scarcity and costliness of manuscripts in that age, is much troubled to get these books into the hands of the poor Jesus. Admit, however, that he procured them of a rich Alexandrian friend; how could he have read and used them? This is a difficulty at which the author, like many others, has not even glanced. It is true, indeed, that a Jew could learn the Hellenistic Greek in Palestine in common life. Admit that Jesus understood it, would that have been sufficient for understanding the elegant philosophical writings of Grecian antiquity? Does a man, in order to read Plato to advantage, need nothing more than a knowledge of the corrupt Greek of the Alexandrian Jews? And how is it possible, if this reading contributed, so very much to the formation of Christ's mind, as the author would have us suppose, that not the least trace of it should be discovered in his discourses, the dress of his thoughts, and his entire mode of teaching? Why are all his instructions clothed in the drapery of Jewish images and modes of representation, and every thing so far removed from the Grecian urbanity and style of thinking, as to leave no one any room to suspect that he was ever a pupil of the Grecian sages?

§ 108. If, however, all the suppositions of the author be conceded, it may be asked, whether he does not impute too much influence to these favorable circumstances, and from them draw greater effects than they would naturally have produced? It might be shown with perfect clearness, were this the place to do so, that this is an error which prevails throughout the explanation which he

* There were persons in the first centuries of the Christian era, who believed that Jesus read and made use of Plato. Augustin, *De Doctr. Christiana*, l. II. c. 28. § 43.

has given of the natural development of Christ's mind. Consider, for instance, the causes which are pretended to have matured Christ's education before he was twelve years of age, and then say, whether the trifles fabricated by the author could have led Jesus on to the attainment of that knowledge and extensive philosophical sagacity, which he is said to have exhibited at that period of life in his dialogues with the priests in the temple at Jerusalem. Consider whether what Jesus is intimated to have said on this occasion respecting divine miracles and revelations, on the supposition of its being altogether true, is agreeable to the mode of thinking which prevailed among the ancients; who, even when most enlightened, had a great inclination for the marvellous. Whence, then could Jesus have learned those assertions, which are opposed to the whole spirit of antiquity, and manifestly bear the impress of the last half of our own century, and what intelligible account can be given of the manner in which during the few preceding years of his life, he acquired this information?

There is a single additional remark, sufficient to show that the author has in every instance attributed too much to the natural causes which are said to have effected Christ's education. All the new light, with which, according to history, our world has been blessed since the origin and extension of Christianity, and every thing peculiar to Christ's plan, to us indeed, aided by the age and experience of many centuries, very clear and intelligible; all those excellent views and that religious knowledge, so fertile in valuable results, and for which we are indebted to Christianity and its founder, are here ascribed to Persians, Alexandrian Jews, and a few priests at Jerusalem, of whom, we are told, Jesus could have learnt them, and by whom he must have been instructed. Can an explanation which involves such palpable confusion of ages, and those convictions of truth demonstrably peculiar to each period, be considered as legitimate and valid? If one may treat the merits of great men as recorded in history in so capricious a manner, it will cost but little trouble to rob

every benefactor of mankind, who has discovered any thing useful and added to the amount of human knowledge, of all the honor and renown to which he is entitled. One has only to attribute what was his, to his teachers and contemporaries, and announce that he acquired it of them, and the riddle is solved. But shall that which would be palpable ignorance, or manifest injustice, if practised upon any meritorious man in history, be looked upon in any other point of view, when practised upon the founder of Christianity? Are we not under the same obligations to be cautious and impartially just in regard to his history, that we are in regard to any other?

§ 109. And, finally, how striking it is, that the author has passed over in silence, all the hindrances and difficulties, which must have obstructed the development of Christ's powers in the natural way. These obstacles, as I shall show directly, are not conjectures nor ingenious fictions, but matters of fact which lie upon the very face of history. Now who does not know that he who undertakes from a certain concourse of external circumstances and a definite series of changes, to give an explanation of the manner in which a human mind became exactly what it was, is bound to look at the unfavorable circumstances as well as the favorable, and form a due comparative estimate of the counteracting effects of each? Of course, he who adduces only one of the two kinds, and by means of fictions and additions, even multiplies and augments it beyond bounds, will fail to give such a practical history of a human mind as a psychologist expects, and at most write nothing more than an agreeable romance. This remark is of especial importance in regard to the history of Jesus. The obstacles which opposed his cultivation in the natural way and must have almost entirely frustrated it, are historically certain, and perfectly evident. Those which are said to have favored it consist of possibilities and conjectures which have by no means all that probability desirable in an affair of such importance. Now is it compatible with the conscientiousness of a his-

torian and the integrity of a philosophical investigator in answering the question, how and by what causes Jesus may have been made what he was, to reject historical certainty, substitute fictitious data in its stead, and erect bold explanations upon a foundation so weak? The circumstances in which, according to unquestionable historical testimony, Jesus actually spent his youth, render it impossible for us to conceive how he could have acquired those uncommon perfections which we have deduced from his plan, or have become the greatest of men, if God, with the intention of making him the means of happiness to the world, did not afford him extraordinary assistance.

There is no need of fearing that the admission of his having received such assistance, will be prejudicial to the meritoriousness of his great qualities. His history informs us that while his great talents were developed by degrees, it was accompanied with a wise and free use of his own powers. This is what Luke means when he says, that Jesus increased in *wisdom, stature, and grace*. Admitting this to be correct, it follows of course, that he was not a mere passive instrument by which the Almighty power of God produced its irresistible effects. The voluntary use that he made of the supernatural advantages which he enjoyed, in whatever they may have consisted, secure him sufficiently against this objection. The fact, however, that these advantages were supernatural, can no more diminish the moral worth of his great qualities, than it can be deemed an objection to another great man, that he arose to a certain degree of excellence by the diligent use of ordinary advantages. Nor can the assertion that Jesus received extraordinary assistance from God, prove in any respect prejudicial to his character, until it be shown, that in conjunction with this, he only arrived at the goal, to which even other great men have attained. So extraordinary, however, are his excellencies, and so manifest and great is the distance which exists between him and the most exalted of men, that, notwithstanding the various obstacles which external

circumstances opposed to his progress, he must have employed the uncommon aid by which he was educated and sustained, in a manner which does him the greatest credit.*

It is time, however, for me to show, that Jesus actually received such divine assistance, and without it, situated as he was, could never have become, what, judging from his great plan, he in reality did.

§ 110. By what means could that deep and penetrating wisdom have been produced in him which is unquestionably exhibited in his plan? He lived among a people, who were then given up to the most senseless superstition, and did not even know how to make a proper use of the excellent instruction respecting God and genuine virtue, which they possessed in their sacred books. He was brought up in a region which was known even among these rude and ignorant people, as one of the roughest and most obscure. Judging from the circumstances, therefore, he received no instruction which could have served for the express development of his faculties. Neither did he ever go out of his country for the purpose, for the journey which he was compelled to make into Egypt, when a child, could not have contributed any thing to his formation in this respect. Hence, he never experienced the benefits which the arts and sciences are able to confer upon the human mind. In general, during the first thirty years of his life he can have displayed nothing which

* [The objection to the immediate relation in which Jesus stood to God, to which an answer is here given, has also been made in a similar way in Bahrds Briefe über die Bibel, Jahrg. II. S. 3 ff.; also in his Ausführung des Plans und Zwecks Jesu, VII. S. 5 ff, and Briefe über den Rationalismus, S. 377 ff. On the other side, however, in addition to Felix Hess in Lavater's miscellaneous writings, Winterth. 1775. I. 110—113, particularly worthy of comparison is J. F. Flatt, Bemerkungen über das Beyspiel Jesu. A contribution to the proof of the position: "can Jesus, notwithstanding his extraordinary faculties, be looked upon as an example for us?" in the Magazin für Christl. Dogm. I. 170—200.; where, S. 188 ff. it is shown in a striking manner, that those very faculties contributed to increase the difficulties which stood in the way of Christ's performing his duties, and enduring the sufferings before him.]

distinguished him in any respect from ordinary men, appeared at all striking, or attracted the attention of his fellow citizens ; for they did not begin decidedly to oppose him until he had acquired some celebrity in Jerusalem by his mighty works, John 4: 45. Accordingly he not only lived among the lowest ranks, but he even spent his youth in obscurity and an employment, which, while it afforded no nourishment for his mind, was calculated to depress him and sink him down in pernicious indolence and despondency. His fellow citizens were perfectly aware of this, and knowing that he had enjoyed no means whatever either in respect to education or society for the development of his mental faculties, were struck with his wisdom, and looked upon it as altogether incomprehensible, John 7: 15.

If under such circumstances he had accomplished only as much as the greatest philosophers of Greece, it would have seemed to be something impossible ; for they were blessed with a thousand advantages in regard to their external circumstances. They often enjoyed the instruction of sagacious teachers, for several years in succession ; they passed their lives in investigation and reflection, and lived among nations by whom the sciences were highly cultivated, and a love of wisdom was honoured, encouraged, and rewarded. Of all this, the founder of Christianity was entirely destitute. He would, therefore, have been far greater than all the philosophers of antiquity, if he had accomplished only as much as they. But he unquestionably did more. His wisdom was not only purer and more exalted but more enlightened and useful. The divine truths which *he* undertook to spread, were scarcely seen by *them* at a distance or obscurely hinted at. He resolved to impart to the world a system of truths, which, human reason, notwithstanding the centuries which it has had for reflection, the numerous investigations which it has gone through with, and the great progress which it has made in every respect, is still obliged to recognise as the best, surest, and most useful that

can be uttered respecting the most important concerns of man, his relation to his creator, and his destination.*

Nothing in this respect is more worthy of attention than his morality. The most sagacious geniuses of antiquity had reflected upon, investigated, and discussed, the chief principles of morality; had furnished themselves with all the means of knowledge then extant, and labored oftener and with more diligence upon ethics than any other branch of human science; and had apparently exhausted the subject, so that nothing new or important could be added to what had already been said. And yet with all their efforts they had failed to represent morality in its true, divine dignity, to perceive the beautiful relation which it sustains to religion, and to give it that intelligibility, warmth, and power which it must have, in order to be useful to all without exception. Without receiving instruction from any one or being acquainted with the investigations of philosophers, and in a country where the most incorrect notions prevailed respecting morality, Jesus thus exhibited it.† With a simplicity, brevity and distinctness, adapted to the most unskilful of his hearers, he gave instruction respecting the destination and obligations of men, of a far more exalted character than the most sagacious philosophers had ever produced. Is it possible to comprehend how this was effected? how he, who was destitute of every thing, calculated to lead on to new discoveries in the kingdom of truth, was able to perform more than the most excellent geniuses before him, with all the advantages by which they were surrounded?

* Comp. Origen, *Contra Cels.* l. 1. § 29. p. 347. [Where he makes precisely the same remarks.]

† "Sparte étoit sobre, avant que Socrate eût loué la sobriété : avant qu'il eût défini la vertu, la Grèce abondoit en hommes vertueux. Mais où Jesus avoit-il pris chez les siens cette morale élevée et pure, dont lui seul a donné les leçons et l'exemple? Du sein du plus furieux fanatisme la plus haute sagesse se fit entendre, et la simplicité des plus héroïques vertus honora le plus vil de tous les peuples." Rousseau, *Emile*, Liv. IV. p. 99. Bip. ed. [of the edition which has been quoted, Tom. IX. 116.]

His very conduct in the delivery of the truths which he wished to extend, is worthy of the greatest attention. His mode of teaching, especially the manner in which he proceeded with his intimate disciples in this respect, is so wise, considerate, and thoroughly adapted to the circumstances which he met with, that the more one is able to throw himself back into those relations in which Jesus lived and acted, the more perfect it appears. It was so very peculiar however, and formed so little after any known pattern, that it is apparent he in this respect took his own course, without having received any direction from others. Must we not especially admire the wisdom and deep penetration with which he avoided the two errors into which all those before him fell, to a greater or less degree, who attempted to spread certain doctrines and aimed to bring them into general circulation,—those of *power* and *inviolable secrecy*? The way of free, undisguised, rational instruction, was manifestly the only correct one; that, in which the genuine illumination and universal reformation of mankind could be the most securely effected. And this was the way that Jesus chose. In this respect also, he is most advantageously distinguished from all the sages who ever preceded him. Let no one think however that this is a trifle. Has not experience shown how difficult it is for a human mind when it is zealously enlisted in favor of certain doctrines, to adhere to this only correct path? Did not even the followers of Jesus depart from it soon after the times of the apostles, and are not mankind at present weak enough to call in, sometimes compulsory laws, at others, secret institutions, to aid the progress of truth? How shall we explain the fact that Jesus alone deviated from this universal custom, and in this respect also stood alone?

But what surpasses every thing which has hitherto been said, and must fill every reflecting mind with astonishment, is the fact, that Jesus had a conception of his great and comprehensive plan, as early as *in the twelfth year of his age*. This is perfectly evident from the answer which he gave his parents, when, having missed him on their way to Galilee, and turned back again, they found him in the

temple at Jerusalem among the teachers of the people : *Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business ?* Luke 2: 49. Whatever explanation we give to these words, at the bottom, they evidently contain the idea, that this lad of twelve years of age even then felt himself destined for the great religious reformer, which he afterwards became ; that even then he had a conviction that he had been born for the purpose of effecting a benevolent change on earth in conformity to the decrees of God.* For even at a

* [This interpretation and application of that passage has been attacked in Röhr's *Briefe über den Rationalismus*, S. 187, with which comp. 162. "Reinhard" says he in the place quoted, "to an expression which unbiassed interpreters look upon, as the expression of a childish, but deep religious feeling, appears in reality to have attributed an idea respecting Jesus which was drawn from the latter years of his life, or in other words, from the result. 'Its meaning,' says Michaelis in his note upon the passage, 'is ; I am in the temple, in the house of God, that is, properly speaking, at home. Why did you not seek for me here ?' Admit that the phrase, *ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου*, designates the house of God, the temple, even then there are two things to be attended to, upon which its literal impression depends ; (1) the words, *τοῦ πατρὸς μου*, which are evidently opposed to the words of Mary, *thy father and I*, &c. and by which, in order to correct this expression, Jesus reminded Mary of the Being whom alone he recognised as his father ; whence of course, it follows, that in this place, he expresses a clear and full consciousness of his sustaining a higher relation to God, than mankind in general ; (2) the words, *δεῖ εἶναι με*, which point to a feeling of duty, and a consciousness of having received a far more important call to engage in divine affairs than one can expect to meet with, according to the ordinary course of things, in a youth of twelve years of age.—Gabler in the *Neueste Theolog. Journal*, (1799) III. 99, acknowledges, 'that this passage, if one is disposed to rely upon a single, definite expression, preserved by Luke respecting the history of Christ's youth, in reality affords very decisive evidence, that he was under an uncommon divine influence, and felt himself, even when in his boyhood and amidst very unfavorable circumstances, to be destined to become a religious reformer. How easily,' continues he, 'might expressions have been transferred from the discourses which Jesus afterwards delivered,—when a man—to the history of his youth ;—expressions which in some respects actually resembled those that he made use of, when a lad ! For instance, in his reply to what his parents objected to his conduct, had he said ; 'Do I act improperly by tarrying in Jehovah's temple ?' how easily might this expression have been transformed into phraseology afterwards used in discharging the duties of his office, thus ; 'Must I not be in the house of my father ?' (*ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναι με*), and yet that expression by no means contain all that this is sup-

later period of life, when his mind was unquestionably filled with the great plan, which we have considered, he ex-

posed to signify."—What other reason, however, is there, for questioning the credibility of this part of Luke's account, than an unwillingness to admit that he says any thing implying that Jesus exhibited a wonderful and premature greatness of mind? If this principle be adopted, every one will be justified in capriciously degrading all that is great and sacred in the community in which he resides. Did not Luke know well from what source he had received his account? Luke 1: 3, 4. Mary carefully preserved the words spoken to her, without forgetting them, though she did not understand their full import until sometime afterwards. But in what respect could these words have proved enigmatical to her and Joseph, or in general, appeared attracting and worthy of being preserved, had Jesus intended nothing more than to say: "Is it improper for me to remain in the temple?" At any rate, if this and other accounts are made up of fictions, whence comes it that the fictions of the Gospels are so spiritual and dignified, while the fictions of the Apocraphy are so spiritless as immediately to betray their spurious character? The words of Hern. v. Meyer may here be adduced as a counter part of the preceding quotation, Ehrenfrieds Lehrabende, Erste Fortsetzung, Ft. a. M., 1808., S. 45—48. "The period in which Christ made himself known may be distinguished by three epochs. The *first*, is his birth, which was celebrated by prophets, wise men, and a choir of angels; the *second*, his appearance in the temple, when a boy of twelve years of age; the *third*, his entrance upon his ministry as a divine messenger, sustained in this character by the greatest power to work miracles. The first ushered in the kingdom of God with a prelude; the second, though in itself considered, an epoch worthy of particular attention, was a prelude to the third.—Jesus was twelve years of age, when the heavenly flower of his wisdom unfolded itself. Here was a case in which instruction from others was superfluous, for he was already acquainted with himself and his destination! 'Wist ye not,' said he, 'that I must be about my father's business?' No lad of twelve years of age could have spoken thus, without being the Messiah, and knowing it. To all others these words were unintelligible and they remained locked up in Mary's breast. Yet, the transactions of this occasion were necessary, in order at a time in which it might be done, without any farther peril to the youth, to reanimate the spirits around with the faith of a Simeon and an Anna, strengthen those who were in expectation of the consolation of Israel, and fill the minds of the learned with splendid reflections. A great event which arouses us, is ordinarily announced at an early period. Then it lies still, until it breaks out for the second and third time. He who attends, can recognise the indications of its fulfilment. But as the multitude never attend, as wickedness is blind, so Jesus ripened before and afterwards, in happy forgetfulness; no one strove after the king of Judah, the prince of the family of David, after the Life. Satan himself was the first who found him, having received permission to tempt him. In the mean time, Christ fulfilled the entire lot of hu-

plained himself in a similar manner respecting it, and, in so doing, gave his hearers to understand that the conception and expression had long been familiar with him, John 4: 34. 8: 29. And, now tell me how a common, indigent lad of Galilee, who had never enjoyed any of those advantages calculated to fill the mind with great conceptions and mighty resolutions, could have struck upon a thought to which the greatest men before him had never approached? Tell me how this thought, and that too at an age when youthful levity and childish play generally occupy the soul, and drive it on in pursuit of delightful sensations and pleasing dreams;—how this thought, indescribably great and serious as it was, could have so completely filled the mind of this boy, and taken such firm possession of it, that he should speak of it with the resolute earnestness of a man, and be able to conceal it for years afterwards and shut it up in his breast for the purpose of avoiding any useless surprise before the time?

With all these unquestionable matters of fact in view, is it possible to explain the laws under whose influence this mind was formed and point out the way which it took in order to arrive at such perfection? It is true that the sacred books of his nation contained the leading ideas of what he taught and allusions to such a plan as his was. But what are these dawning rays compared with the surpassing splendor of this sun of righteousness? Why did not thousands and thousands of his fellow citizens who possessed these books, make his discoveries, and obtain some hint of his plan? Why were the learned men of his nation, who were occupied their whole lives, with these writings, simple fools, and short-sighted, circumscribed chatterers in comparison with him? Whence did

manity. Possessed of an equal eternity with the Father, he passed through the limits of time, not becoming suddenly what he was, but gradually increasing in more extensive wisdom, in manliness, and grace, in the presence of God and man, even after the scene in the temple, and until he had arrived to perfect maturity, becoming a man without equal, and active as the founder of a new, a heavenly kingdom upon the theatre of the world.""]

he acquire the intelligibility, definiteness, and highly wonderful simplicity with which he spoke respecting the most important concerns of mankind, upon which, in touching images and short narrations, he uttered more that is true and useful than can be found upon the subject in the most laborious investigations of philosophers? Here every thing is incomprehensible. If God did not enlighten him and destine him for a teacher of the world, it is not easy to see how He, this man from the low crowd, in the midst of an ignorant nation, could have conceived the idea of his great plan, and become the founder of a religion which is more rational, exalted, and benevolent, than any the world ever contained; how he could have soared to the attainment of a wisdom by which he left all other wise men far behind him.

§ 111. But farther;—it is very difficult to comprehend how *that firmness and strength of soul* could have been produced in him, without which he could never have sustained a conception of his great plan, much less, have been able to cherish and carry it through with pleasure. Had the strength of his soul consisted of that wildfire which rages in the conqueror, and drives him on to fool-hardy undertakings, then there would be no cause for wonder. It is evident from a multitude of examples, that this quality is developed with the greatest facility among a barbarous people. But the strength of his mind was the energetic activeness of an enlightened soul, which, having once rationally considered and resolved upon its enterprises, shuns no difficulty, shrinks from no obstacle. Notwithstanding the zeal with which he operated, the irresistible power with which he pressed on to his goal, he took no precipitate step, adopted no improper measures, and acted with a wisdom and moderation, which one would by no means expect to find in a mind of such strength. His prudence exceeded every thing of the kind that had actually been witnessed among his people, and never suffered him amidst the noisy applauses which sometimes fell to his lot, to be blinded, or seduced into an erroneous opinion. This prudence of itself affords proof of his having had ex-

traordinary self-possession ; as nothing is more common than for even great men to place too early confidence in the flattering appearance of a favourable event, and either to become far too secure, or begin to act with improvidence, John 2: 23—25.

Now what was there to favor and cherish such strength of mind as that which awakened this courage in the founder of Christianity? Had he received an education which kindled in him an unextinguishable flame for great undertakings ;—but it is well known that he had received nothing of the kind. Had he possessed power, and by means of connexions and affluent circumstances, been able to calculate upon procuring for himself with ease, a great and extensive influence ;—but we are informed that he was a poor Jew, of mean origin, totally destitute of power and authority, and had nothing to depend upon for assistance derived from his condition in life. Had his courage been cherished and his heart inspired with especial boldness by the rapid success of his undertakings and the hope of soon being able to arrive at the goal of his wishes ;—but neither was the case. The result of his most zealous efforts was upon the whole so bad, that the strongest mind without his heroism would have given up all in despair. The surprise which he created, was not the effect that he desired. He saw indeed, that great crowds ran after him, and people of every class pressed around him. They were put in motion, however, by hopes of earthly greatness and dazzling power, which bound them in magic fetters, and wrapt them up in sweet and delusive dreams. These he was obliged to suppress ;—a work, which, while it put his courage to a severe test and called upon him to impart to his countrymen better knowledge and information, from their obstinacy he was scarcely able to effect. What should he do with his proud nation, so totally misapprehensive as it was of its real wants and infatuated almost to madness by the giddiness of extravagant expectations? which prejudice should he attack in the first place? How could he infuse into these rough men that love of truth, that

zeal for virtue, that tender benevolence, and that forbearing calmness to which they would not even listen, and that, because they desired of him enjoyment and wealth, authority and power, and in particular, dominion over the heathen; and in case he did not fulfil this desire, were ready to mock, insult, and crucify him upon the spot? For several years in succession did he labor with them, and then he was as far from accomplishing his object in this respect, as at first. By all his efforts and journeys and perils he was unable to divest even his own intimate disciples of those prejudices, which, if not totally eradicated, would have prevented the execution of his plan.* Under such adverse circumstances, was it possible to produce that firmness and strength of soul, which, in spite of every difficulty, should adhere steadily to the idea of carrying into effect a plan of universal benevolence?

It inspires a man with courage to see a goal before him and be able to hope that in process of time he shall reach it. Thus circumstanced, he labors, suffers, and struggles, because assured that it will not be in vain. But where was the goal, the sight of which could have sustained the courage of the founder of Christianity? He might easily have known that his extremely rude nation would not long permit him to labor and toil for the execution of his plan. He saw that this execution would require a course of centuries. And yet he shrunk not from the undertaking, but adhered faithfully to his purpose in death. Were there grounds to suspect him of enthusiasm, I would cease to inquire any longer for those causes in which such unheard of firmness of soul could have originated. But that man must be ignorant of what enthusiasm is, who is able to discover the

* Celsus, *vid.* Origen, *lib.* II. *Sect.* 33 *seqq.* [especially *Sect.* 39. p. 413 and 417, *de la Rue*,] adduces the small success of Christ's efforts as an objection to Christianity and its founder, and Origen takes great pains to represent the effects of Christ's instruction as great and extensive. He might have saved himself all this trouble, for this small success, rightly contemplated, proves very honourable to the founder of Christianity.

least traces of it here. Every suspicion of the kind is annihilated by the single remark, that the prevailing tone of his mind was not animation, wild zeal, nor raging passion, but a still, rational calmness which no passing attacks of fanatic rage and extravagance could interrupt or disturb.* But it is indeed, altogether incomprehensible how in one and the same person, this cool reflection and calm equanimity of temper could have been combined with a burning activity and bold enterprising courage, so far excelling all the fire and courage of the most notable heroes.

Let the natural way, therefore, be pointed out which the mind of Jesus took to acquire such greatness; let reasons be given to show why he unquestionably had greater courage than the boldest spirits of antiquity, and exercised it in a way entirely different from what they were accustomed to do. The men of great internal power before him were usually conquerors; and he also might have been one, if he had chosen. According to the common course of things he must almost have been obliged to be one. He lived in a country in which every heart was inflamed with a spirit of insurrection. No persons were more sensitive and passionate, none more ready to fly to arms at the least hint, than the restless Galileans among whom he was brought up.† How was it possible for his mind, full of ardor, activity and courage, not to be affected with the same mode of thinking prevalent among his countrymen, driven on to warlike enterprises, nor even in tender youth, to receive a false direction? In the latter part of his life, he was not only presented with excellent opportunities for undertaking something great, but he was expressly called upon to free his native country from the disgraceful yoke of foreigners, and place himself at the head of the nation. His Gali-

* Comp. Hess, Ueber die Lehren, Thaten, und Schicksale unsers Herrn, S. 244 ff. [Ausc. von 1806, zweite Hälfte, S. 196 ff.]

† [Josephus bears particular testimony to the warlike character of the Galileans; De bello Jud. III. 3, 2. Haverc. II. 233, with which compare Wetstein upon Luke 23: 4. Tom. I. 742.]

lean citizens were in a state of very great excitement, as Herod had caused John the Baptist to be beheaded.* Had Jesus only seized upon this occasion, he might have soon rendered himself terrible to this odious ruler. But so far was he from stimulating the exasperated nation, that, in order not to be the cause of disturbances incidentally, he withdrew himself from the multitude which sought him with such eagerness, and retired into the region of the sea of Galilee. More than once, great crowds, under the influence of the hopes which they entertained of Jesus, having been inflamed and rendered as courageous as lions, were resolved to take him by force and make him their leader. He was a descendant of David, that ever honored hero and king; and his mother had been informed by an angel, that God would give her son the throne of David his father, and exalt him to be ruler of the people Israel, Luke 1: 32, 33. His very birth, therefore, seemed not only to justify him in thinking of the deliverance of his countrymen, who had long fought and striven to shake off the foreign yoke, and who burnt with desire to wash away the reproach which they had hitherto suffered, in the blood of the heathen, but to absolutely compel him to do so. Finally, he was required to do this at an age, when he possessed the strength of youth and all the glowing fire of a great and enterprising mind. Even here, however, his exalted spirit took a way new and altogether peculiar to himself. Amidst all the seducing excitements with which he was surrounded, he remained faithful to his plan, in the execution of which no force was to be employed, and treated the renown of a hero for which the greatest men before him had thirsted, with magnanimous contempt.† Whence all this moderation

* Comp. Hess, *Geschichte der drey letzten Lebensjahre Jesu*, Th. I. B. IV. K. 1. S. 235. [Nach der 8n. Ausg. v. 1822, S. 523 ff.]

† [Comp. Hess, *Lehre, That. u. Schicks. uns. Herrn*, II. 61 f. (15 f. der A. v. 1816.) "Jesus must have heard much said of a Judas of Galilee, and his seditious undertakings in a country which was soon to be the theatre of his own actions. Such an example as that set by this restless zealot, especially among a people as enterprising

and forbearing meekness on the one hand, and this unquestionable firmness and strength on the other? How could Jesus, left as he was to himself, and under circumstances which would naturally have produced directly the opposite effects, have attained to such cultivation? How can that courage be accounted for, with which, though animated by no appearance of happy results, he adhered to his plan even to the last, and the firmest, indeed, when God and man had as it were united against him, and every thing seemed to result in nothing; at the *time of his death*? If he was not sustained by the Deity, upon whom in a plan of this character, every thing immediately depends; if the Creator did not make him a benefactor of his race, I know not what to answer. At least, he was not deceived in his hopes. So far was his plan from being frustrated by his death, that its execution went on much easier and better than before.

§ 112. And, finally, what shall I say of the benevolence, embracing all mankind, that lay at the basis of this plan, which the founder of Christianity had delineated before him for the good of the world? Here he is

as the Galileans in general, and as irritable and fickle as the inhabitants of Nazareth in particular, (Luke iv. comp. v. 22 with vs. 28, 29,) might easily have lighted up the breast of a youth full of talent and fire, but destitute of firmness, and a self-control under the guidance of wisdom, with the invincible sparks and impulse of freedom, and that to a most dangerous flame. But then such an one would hardly have remained a mere spectator until thirty years of age. It is worthy of particular remark in regard to our Lord that he was able to live for so long a time among so seditious a people as the Jews, without allowing himself to become in the least degree a partizan and partake in their spirit of revenge, or among so irritable countrymen, without being infected with their obstinacy and their prejudices. What he saw or heard of brooding uproar seemed rather to produce an opposite effect upon him, and confirm him in his resolution to have nothing to do with any thing of the kind. When the account came from Jerusalem, that Pilate had caused some Galileans to be slain while engaged in the business of sacrificing, (an account of itself alone sufficient to inflame the irritable Jews to a sedition,) not a bitter word escaped from his mouth. He represented their fate as a misfortune, not absolutely undeserved, nor yet particularly deserved, but as a warning to those around him."]

entirely without example. We have searched all the ancients to find such a plan, in vain. His taste in this respect differed altogether from theirs. Moreover nothing could have been less favorable to this magnanimous and unparalleled benevolence than the mode of thinking peculiar to the nation in which Jesus lived. It is not easy for a people to be farther removed from genuine, active philanthropy, than the Jews were at the time of Christ. They looked upon the heathen with the greatest contempt, and even shunned intercourse with them as far as possible for fear of being contaminated. By means of the odious reign of Herod the Great, who was a foreigner and recognised the Jewish religion only in appearance, and by means of the Roman supremacy, under which the country afterwards fell, this aversion had been greatly increased, and finally it ended in universal exasperation. Under such circumstances was Jesus brought up, and one would suppose that with the strength of mind which he possessed, and the ardent courage with which he braved the greatest difficulties, he would have become the deliverer of his country, and have endeavored to procure for his nation that dignity, which, according to Jewish pride, they were to maintain among nations less beloved, or perhaps even reprobated by their Creator ; especially as he found his fellow citizens, as I remarked above, very much bent upon such an undertaking. But his soul was not narrow and contracted enough to devote itself to such a plan. In the midst of circumstances which might have bound it up entirely in the fetters of Jewish selfishness, and in senseless, national pride, it enlarged itself to an extent of benevolence, to a universal feeling of kindness, to a tenderness and philanthropy, of which history furnishes us with no similar example. In the plan formed by Jesus, not a trace is to be discovered of that aversion to heathen nations, so peculiar to the Jews in Palestine. On the other hand, one of its principal objects was the removal of that distinction which had hitherto existed between Jews and heathen. Mankind were to be saved, educated, and blessed, by its influence, whatever they were.

How was it possible for a man who embraced all the nations of the earth in the greatest love, and projected one of the most benevolent plans that ever sprung from a human mind, to derive his origin from a nation which despised all other nations, made hatred to them a religious duty, and considered it criminal to approach them or form connexions with them? Here every thing is new and incomprehensible; every thing governed by strange laws. External circumstances and relations are constantly at variance with the disposition and feelings of Jesus, and produce in him effects directly the opposite to what they usually do in other cases. Under such circumstances, no human mind has ever developed such qualities. *If God was not with this man*, it is not easy to see how he became what he was; how he could possibly have acquired that heavenly dignity, greatness, and elevation, with which he stands forth unequalled and alone in the vast space of history, far surpassing in splendor all that is worthy of admiration upon earth.

§ 113. And now let him, who has a sense of what true greatness of mind is, who can rejoice to hear of genuine magnanimity, bold undertakings, and benevolent plans, and is impartial and just enough to acknowledge, esteem, and love, truth, exaltation, and goodness, wherever found, reflect, once more, upon the extraordinary plan which I have been considering; call to mind the qualities for which its author was so strikingly distinguished, and then ask his heart, whether it is rational and just, to treat with indifference, and perhaps with base ridicule and profane contempt, the conception of such a man as Christ was; who, without any external aid, could not only undertake the most important work that was ever attempted, but even effect a movement which should reach to so many nations and last for centuries; let him consider whether such conduct is not a most biting satire upon the mind and heart of him who can so far forget himself as to be guilty of it; and whether the conviction of the many thousands, who have been induced by numerous other reasons, to look upon the founder of Christianity as a

most exalted ambassador from God to our race, as well as their Redeemer and Saviour, is not far more rational than that frivolity, which, without any rational proof, believes the contrary.

APPENDIX.

A. p. 6.

Respecting the manner in which Reinhard has apprehended the plan of Jesus.

SOME Christian readers, having hearts familiar and thoroughly penetrated with the entire representation given by the Evangelists of the work of redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ, may be surprised, and after all, dissatisfied, on finding that this production of Reinhard contains but a partial representation of Christ's plan. It must be recollected, however, that Reinhard exhibits the plan of Jesus only as that of an institution calculated for the religious instruction and improvement of mankind at large, and, at the very commencement (p. 5) expressly declares it not to be his intention to speak of the appropriate work of redemption accomplished by Christ, that is, of the expiation of sin effected by his death, and the salvation of mankind from guilt and condemnation. That Reinhard had any doubts as to this part of Christ's work, or confined his entire merit as a Saviour, to his merit as a teacher, no one can believe, who has ever glanced at his other writings, especially his *Sermons*, *Theology*, and *Confessions*.* The question however may arise: What

* [The following places among others may be consulted: Sermon on the Reformation, Predigten, Vol. II. for 1800; Geständnisse, Br. IX. S. 90 ff., Sulzb., 1810; Dogmatik, § 89 ff. 4te. Aufl., especially § 107; where, after having mentioned various minor objects which were to be accomplished by Christ's death, he concludes with stating the grand one; namely, to deliver mankind from the guilt and punishment of sin, and then goes on to guard and defend the doctrine that Christ's sufferings were vicarious, against the Socinians, Universalists, &c. Comp. also, Biblical Theology, transl. from the work of Storr and Flatt by Schmucker, Vol. II. pp. 218, 229. Tr.]

induced Reinhard to take such a general view of Christ's plan, and whether this part of it can be separated from Christ's other work?

The reasons of Reinhard's mode of proceeding in this respect, are easy to be discovered. It is necessary, in the first place, to go back to the occasion of the present publication in the year 1781. This was the appearance of the Wolfenbuttel Fragment respecting the object of Jesus shortly before, or in the year 1778. In this work, the ethical character of Christ's plan was entirely mistaken and the plan itself degraded into an ignoble, though unsuccessful one, for assuming the control of the nation. How it was possible for a man of Reimarus' noted moral* character and distinguished, learned, and scientific education, thus to misapprehend the object of Jesus, so clearly laid down in the New Testament, and treat his personal character with insult, and often with rude profanity, will always belong to psychological problems. To the Wolfenbuttel Fragmentist, succeeded Bahrdt who did not impute to Christ a political plan indeed, for he acknowledged the moral tendency of his plan, but yet, in another point of view, he brought suspicion upon Christ's character and mode of introducing his doctrines, by making him employ the deceptions of a secret society for the purpose, which would necessarily obscure the personal dignity of Jesus and the pure splendor of his work. In opposition to these calumnies, Reinhard came forward in behalf of Christianity, and triumphantly defended the

* That Reimarus was the author of the *Fragmente*, Meusel considered *only as probable* in the *Lexicon der 1750—1800*, verst. deutsch. Schriftst. XI. 132; but since the communications made by Hartmann in the *Leipz. Litt. Zeit.* 1825, Sep. Nr. 231, 232, and by Oertel, Decemb. Nr. 299., also in the *Zweifel*, 1826, März, Nr. 60, to which, Nr. 61, and 1827, März, Nr. 55, an answer has been written by Gurlitt, may be looked upon as decided. Had it not been far from Reimarus' intention to publish *The Fragments*, one would be tempted here to adopt the opinion of Samuel Johnson, respecting the publication of Bolingbroke's works after his death. Vid. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, Vol. I. 171. [Vol. I. p. 210, Bost., 1807. To this may also be added the opinion of Geo. Whitefield. Vid. his *Eighteen Sermons*, S. XVI. p. 205, N. B. N. J., 1802. Tr.]

purity of its founder both in respect to his object and the means which he selected for its accomplishment. If these circumstances be kept in view, it will be perceived that Reinhard could not well have given greater extent to his labor than he has done, and that an investigation of the entire work of redemption accomplished by Christ, was necessarily excluded. He was obliged to adhere to the general question : Was the tendency and influence of Christ's plan ethical in the main or not? Moreover Reinhard thought that some readers, who were still undecided in their opinion respecting Christianity and its author, and very far from believing in the doctrine of expiation, needed a general introduction to the truths of the Gospel ; and hence, that it would be very appropriate for such readers to have an explanation given in the first place, of the moral dignity of Christ and his work simply, in order that their hearts might be thus rendered susceptible of true reverence towards the person of Jesus Christ. That Reinhard has accomplished this object in regard to many persons can be admitted with certainty.* A man could now hardly be found who would repeat the defamations which have been uttered in the Wolf. Frag. respecting the sacred name of Jesus, or refuse to pronounce all his arguments, sophisms. It would be difficult to find a man who would give his assent to the fictions of Bahrtdt. The investigation respecting the purity of Christ's plan, is decided and brought as it were to a close ; and who can doubt, that Reinhard's work exerted an essential influence in giving a better direction to general opinion in this respect ?

Then the compass to which this work of Reinhard is confined, may also be defended, if it be considered in a scientific point of view. It is an apologetical perform-

* Comp. for example, the honorable opinion of the sprited and accomplished philologist, Mörlin, in Lenning's Encyclopädie der Freimaurei, I. 187, aus dem Altenb. Journal für Fr. Maurerei, B. II. Heft. 1. u. 2, where he expressly acknowledges that Reinhard has developed the arguments brought forward against Bahrtdt's hypothesis, in a clear and acute manner.

ance, and to be looked upon as a "contribution to the proofs of the Christian religion." Apologetics, however, according to the views which Grotius* has correctly taken of them, have nothing to do with defending the single doctrines and positive precepts of Christianity. If this were the case, it would be necessary for them to comprehend the whole of theology and polemics, for which however, they only prepare the way. The object which they aim to accomplish, is a scientific exhibition of the arguments in proof of the divine authority of Christianity as a revelation in general. They inquire, therefore, whether, and how, Christ was accredited as a divine messenger. They begin with a preliminary examination respecting the genuineness of the divine credentials, which Christ received, and then proceed to a closer scrutiny of the purport of his heavenly commission. If, therefore, the views taken by Reinhard of Christ's plan, are brought forward as a series of apologetical deductions, it is sufficient; there is no need of doing any thing more than giving a general prominence to the moral part of this plan, the part worthy of God.

If, in regard to this subject, the question be asked; where shall we begin with skeptics, and those who oppose Christianity, in order to incline them to favor it in only a general degree, every one will readily see that it would not be easy to commence with the expiation of sin by Christ, which is one of the deeper mysteries. The first step to be taken in order to lead such persons to believe at all in Christ, is, evidently, to make them acquainted with his character and his plan so closely connected with it, or the peculiar spirit which pervaded his whole life and all his actions, as being in a moral point of view, to the highest degree venerable and deserving of love. So long as a person entertains doubts respecting the purity of Christ's character, he cannot be expected to have gen-

* Comp. the article *Apologetik* in the 4th Bd. der *Ersch-Gruberschen Encyclopädie*. [Vid. the article also in the *Encyclop. Am. or Conv. Lex.* Consult also Sack's *Apologetik*, Hamb., 1829. Tr.]

uine faith in him, and he who has not unhesitatingly recognised Christ as the holy one among men, is by no means prepared to recognise him as a mediator.

Perhaps many readers and even critics of Reinhard's work, by overlooking the above named point, will be led to impute to him a view of Christianity from which he was very far removed, and make him look upon it as nothing more than the means employed by Providence for the advancement of rational religion. This supposition may even procure for this work the approbation of many persons who would otherwise have rejected it with disdain. Should this be the case, however, it would be unjust to make use of it for the purpose of censuring the author, and accusing him of having been the occasion of deception in this thing, by taking an imperfect or impartial view of the object and work of Jesus.

If, however, abstracted from all this, the question should be asked, whether in real, practical Christianity, in the contemplation of a Christian feeling for Christ, it be possible to form a conception of his plan and keep it distinct from his entire and complete work as a Redeemer, it would scarcely need a reply, for obviously it is not. Christ himself is one; his work is one great work. As this work is not divisible in itself, so neither is it, as an object of a living faith. Faith is to adopt and embrace the whole Christ, *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1: 30. This Christ is to remain inseparable, or to use an old figure which Reinhard, (vid. his *Life* by Pöhlitz, II. S. 265,) after the example of Cyprian (*De unitate Ecclesiae ab init.*, p. 181. ed. Prior. Par. 1666,) and Whitefield, (vid. Burkhard's *Geschichte der Methodisten*, II. S. 99,) also delighted to employ, *the coat of Christ was without seam, and remained undivided*. If then the plan of Jesus was intended for the advancement of genuine morality in close connexion with love to God, then not to recognise who he was, and how in his mission and the sacrifice he offered for us, he has laid before us the highest and strongest motive for inducing us to love God and

man, John 3. 16. 1 John 4: 16, 19, is to sever its very nerves. The establishing of the kingdom of God and the reception of mankind into it, could not have been effected without the complete reconciliation of mankind with God.

B. p. 28.

Concerning the first quality and the original extent of Christ's plan.

Reinhard assumes that Jesus had a perfectly clear conception of the plan which he intended to form and execute, at the very commencement of his career, and, as far as this was concerned, always remained the same; as also that this plan in the mind of Jesus had that unlimited universality imputed to it in the Gospels. Both positions have lately been questioned, and other views proposed in their stead.

I. In relation to the first, it has been asserted, that, notwithstanding the obviously moral and religious nature of Christ's intentions, and his decided aversion to political undertakings and violent revolutions, he did not reject all idea of exerting a mediate and indirect influence in improving the external condition of his people and effecting their civil deliverance; that, during the first period of his public life in particular, he had hoped to be publicly recognised as the Messiah on the part of the nation; in which case, according to the notions entertained by his countrymen upon the subject, as their theocratical king, he would have been entitled to the supreme power in the state, though it does not appear that he had thought of the relation which the theocratical king of the people would in this case sustain to the Roman government; that afterwards, when Jesus clearly saw the fate which awaited him and the error of this hope, he rejected all the national and political relations of his plan, and adhered solely to the religious part of the theocracy; and that

hence, originated the formation of the plan of a spiritual kingdom, though perhaps he was not lead to this measure without great internal conflicts; that it is even probable that Jesus did not immediately and unconditionally relinquish all effort for the establishment of an external theocracy, even after he had taken this resolution, but rather left the decision of the matter solely to the will of God as indicated in the unalterable course of things.*

In proof of these assertions it is maintained: (1) That this theocratical hope was necessarily connected with the notions which the Jews had of the Messiah, and it is not easy to see for what purpose he needed this name, as a mere teacher of morality and a religious founder, and that his very entrance into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi., excited such political hopes; (2) that expressions are to be met with, in which Christ indicated an expectation of beholding his kingdom solemnly commenced during his lifetime, as for instance, Matt. 10: 23. 16: 27, 28. 24: 34; (3) that it is evident that Jesus entertained such a hope during the former part of his life from the prevailing serenity by which he was characterized, and afterwards gave it up, from the anxious melancholy which he passed through; and that the mental struggle he endured in Gethsemane was occasioned by the destruction of such hopes; especially, as he had previously expressed the same sorrow in view of the approaching desolation of his people, Luke 19: 41—44; (4) that the belief of the apostolic church, that Christ was to establish an external kingdom, betrays this. It will be proper to subjoin something by way of confusing the most weighty arguments in favor of the above assertions.

* So Hase in particular, *Das Leben Jesu*, S. 85—89. 100 f. 109—113. 129. 149 f. 174 f., L. 1829, the fundamental traits of whose representation are to be found in De Wette, *Commentat. de morte I. C. expiatoria*, p. 87 seqq., with which however compare his *Bibl. Dogm.* § 216 seqq. S. 195 ff.; so also in part, Ammon, *Bibl. Theol.* II. 378 f.; Paulus, *Leben Jesu*, I. 2. S. 106 f. II. 2. XI. &c., as also many passages of his commentary; Gieseler, *Lehrbuch des K. G.*, I. 67 ff.; and the author of the work, *Der Streit der Kirche*; a work dedicated to the Christian nobility of the German nation, I. c. 2, L. 1827.

The Messiahship of which Jesus conceived, was not in any respect a political theocracy, but purely a spiritual one. He did not draw it from the notions which the people entertained upon the subject, but from the word of God, and it was proper that he should commence by doing so. Now he was this true Messiah, and the Saviour having been announced in the Old Testament under this name, he could not do otherwise than confess and show himself to be such. Had Jesus considered the idea of a Messiah only as an incidental, national, and temporal one, he would not have made use of it. He looked upon it however as positively certain, as firmly decreed by God, that a Messiah should make his appearance, and that *he himself* was the person. The execution of his entire work, therefore, was connected with his being recognised as the Messiah. He could not be the spiritual Saviour if he were not the divine instrument of redemption pointed out in the Old Testament, under the name of the Messiah. As the Jews, however, had blended erroneous, impure, and secondary conceptions with the pure idea of the Messiah, Jesus was obliged to conduct with much reserve in making known his claims to this dignity and correct the notions entertained by his countrymen upon the subject. All his operations and instructions were directed to the accomplishment of this object, as has already been shown by Reinhard with sufficient clearness, by whom also a lucid explanation has been given of the real character of his last entrance into Jerusalem.

That (2) in the places cited, Christ has expressed even a hope of commencing the establishment of an earthly kingdom, cannot be admitted without directly contradicting the explanations which he himself has given of them in other places. The coming of Jesus can unquestionably be understood of different events as is the case with the coming of God in the Old Testament, and from Matt. 26: 64, when Jesus was already devoted to death, and cannot possibly have been thinking of the establishment of his kingdom as an earthly one, it is evident, that this coming was a revelation of his heavenly dominion and power

which was soon to be commenced and gradually be developed; that this revelation commenced immediately after his resurrection from the dead, became manifest in the out pouring of the spirit and the establishment of the church, was exhibited in the judgement brought upon the whole Jewish nation, was continued in guiding and extending the church, and will be continued from age to age until the final judgement of the world. *This* coming of Jesus, therefore, many of his contemporaries actually lived to see.

(3) That a change took place in the direction of Christ's mind;—that in the former period of his life, it was serene, and in the latter, melancholy, is an assumption altogether without proof, a pure matter of fiction. The joy which he felt on the successful commencement of his work by the messengers whom he had sent forth, Luke 10: 21, had not the least connexion with the hope of being publicly recognised by his nation. On the other hand, the expression of joy which he uttered on this occasion, followed the denunciation of fearful woes against those cities which believed not on his name, vs. 13.—15. Nor in Luke 4: 18—21, is there any thing to be found of those high and serene hopes which Jesus is supposed to have had at the commencement of his career. On the contrary, having sharply censured the insensibility of his hearers, vs. 23—27, the short and transitory emotions which he had excited in their minds, were followed by the greatest aversion and contempt, vs. 28, 29.—To attribute the sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane to disappointed hopes, is to assume as proved what in the first place needs proof. Or was this frustration of cherished hopes the only conceivable cause of the struggle which he there endured? Certainly other and deeper causes are to be discovered. With such a tender heart indeed as Jesus possessed, he could not avoid being deeply afflicted on looking forward to the civil destruction of his nation, especially when in it, he recognised the judgement of God, a sign of the greatest corruption and obduracy of heart, and the coming, far more extensive, spiritual deterioration of his countrymen,

Matt. 12: 45. That Jesus, however, ever flattered himself with being able to effect the civil deliverance of his people, this circumstance does not afford the least proof.

And finally, (4) as to the earthly expectations of the apostles or the Chiliastic opinions of later Christians, we know, that Christ labored incessantly to oppose the *former* from the very commencement, and that the *latter* were introduced into Christianity from Judaism, and cannot possibly be deduced from Jesus.

The assertion respecting the belief of the apostolic church is not merely destitute of tenable proof. It stands directly opposed to the strongest arguments. The whole Evangelical history shows that from the very out-set, Jesus expected nothing else than to be misapprehended and rejected by his people, and consequently, that he can never have thought of being able to effect their civil deliverance. He declared his expectations, on his very first appearance in Nazareth, as we find in Luke 4: 23—27, where he says expressly, that it was not in his native country, but among the heathen and strangers that he should find persons to acknowledge him, as was formerly the case with Elijah and Elisha, and the event even in Nazareth showed how correctly he had judged in this respect. Hence, he not only calculated that many in Jerusalem would exercise a short and superficial faith in him, John 2: 23, but he went so far as to maintain a wise and shy reserve in regard to them, because he knew what was in man, vs. 24, 25. In one of the first discourses which he delivered to his disciples, Matt. 5: 11. Luke 6: 22, he declared that they would be reviled and persecuted on his account; that men would hate them, excommunicate them, reproach them, and cast out their name as evil for the *Son of man's sake*. How can such annunciations as these made by Jesus at the very commencement of his ministry, be reconciled with the supposition that he entertained the hope of being recognised? When, as we are told in Matt. 8: 8, 9, the heathen centurion exhibited remarkable faith in Jesus, he immediately broke out in the confession that no such faith was to be found in Israel; that the children of the king-

dom were to be rejected, while strangers from afar should be introduced into his kingdom. How plainly do such sudden assertions, called forth as they were, by some incidental circumstance, betray the expectations of his soul! Where can a single assertion of the opposite kind be met with, the meaning of which is equally clear? Not even his brethren and relatives believed upon him, John 7: 5. Could he anticipate any thing more from the rest of the multitude? He was well acquainted with them, and knew that it was impossible to please them, Matt. 11: 16—19. On this very account, he could not think of the civil deliverance of his people! Even John the Baptist had a presentiment of the approaching destruction of his nation, Matt. 3: 10. Was Christ less acquainted with the future?—With passages taken from the latter part of Christ's life we have nothing to do here, as it is admitted that then he had relinquished all idea of being recognised by his people as their theocratical king.—Should it be asked by way of objection, why Jesus nevertheless used his utmost exertions to bring the people to believe in him as the Messiah? why he acted as if he supposed they would recognise him as such, if he indulged in no hope of the kind? a satisfactory answer is at hand. Jesus was called to be the Saviour of mankind, to found a kingdom of God and invite all men into it. He was obliged to fulfil this call, and make known the truth to every one, whatever might be the consequence. The performance of a duty does not depend upon the failure or success of the operations contemplated. The herald of truth is obliged to lay down his testimony, whether men listen to it or not. Love should never grow weary in making efforts, and new ones too, for reforming those who err, however ineffectual they may be.* Jesus acted in such a spirit. He worked the works of Him who sent him, how little soever the result corresponded with his efforts. How truly were the

* Fichte has some excellent remarks upon this subject, *Anweis. zum seligen Leben*, S. 301 f.

words of the prophet Isaiah, 49: 4, fulfilled with regard to him: "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain. Yet surely my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God." He was bound, at least, not to fail by his remissness to exculpate God in this respect, and deprive the nation of all excuse. Besides, it should be recollected, that though the nation as a body did not receive him, yet there were not wanting individuals who believed upon him, and became a good seed from which issued the first church of Christ. In this respect, his labor was not in vain.

Moreover, the supposition that Jesus expected to be recognised by his nation and thus enabled to found an external theocracy, is in direct opposition to the fact, that, from the very commencement of his career, he had a positive conviction that he was to suffer a violent death. Of the importance of this fact we may be assured from the strenuous efforts which its opposers have made to deprive those passages brought forward in its favor, of all their force; or rather, as this is impossible, from the violence with which these opposers have assailed them. John 2: 19: 22, has already been remarked upon in a note on pp. 72 and 73. Another meaning has indeed been opposed to the one given to these verses by the Evangelist, but if the authors of it were honest, they would confess that it has been brought forward merely because of its incompatibility with Christ's prediction of his death and resurrection. Christ, however, foretold his death with equal clearness in the dialogue which he held with Nicodemus. This dialogue bears the strongest marks of genuineness and authenticity, as it exhibits a clear connexion, and a regular and well meditated progression. Jesus continues the thread of the discourse with a steady hand, notwithstanding all the digressions of Nicodemus. He first informs this ruler of the necessity there is of his being born of the spirit through an external consecration, inasmuch as the Jews must experience such a new birth before they can be admitted into the kingdom of

heaven. He then speaks of the means by which this spiritual regeneration must be effected, and after severely censuring Nicodemus for the ignorance which obliges him though a scribe to inquire after this means, leads him deeper and deeper into the secrets of the divine will, and affirms that he himself is the Messiah sent from heaven for this purpose, and to effect it and procure the redemption of all according to the requisitions of the love of God, must be lifted upon the cross. And, finally, he concludes with seriously reminding Nicodemus, and that too in a manner which must have cut him to the heart, that he must believe on the Son of God and openly advocate this cause as an indispensable condition of salvation, and also that unbelief springs out of a corrupt heart and will end in destruction. In close connexion with the chain by which all parts of this dialogue are linked together, is to be found *the lifting up* of the Son of man by which this redemption is to be effected;—a thing reckoned among heavenly things, or those which can be known only by divine revelation, and entirely distinct from earthly things or those which can be ascertained by common experience (such as the deep ruin of mankind and their need of salvation,) and extolled as affording the highest proof of the love of God;—in far too close a connexion indeed, and constituting too essential a part of the chain itself, to allow of listening to the accusation that the passage was foisted in by John.*

* Comp. the Commentary of De Wette just quoted, p. 89, Note. There is no reason given sufficient to show why John may not have been admitted as a hearer to take part in this important dialogue. It is true, that Nicodemus wished for no witnesses. It is certain, however, that he had nothing to fear from any but the inimical, and had no reason to suspect that the innocent apostles would betray him to the rulers as a secret disciple of Jesus. The supposition that Jesus treated his apostles in so exoteric a manner as to exclude them from dialogues which he held with still more secret and more confidential friends than they were, is a groundless fiction, and one which agrees but badly with the frankness of Christ's character and the intimacy of his intercourse with the apostles. To suppose in addition to this that Matt. 17: 3 refers to secret allies altogether unknown to the apostles who allowed themselves to employ a pretended voice of God for the purpose of deception, is to fall directly into the profanations of the history of Jesus which

In addition to this proof taken from the Gospel of John, we find testimony of an equally early date, in Matt. 9: 15, that Jesus entertained a certain expectation of death, in the figurative language of his reply to the question, "Why do not thy disciples fast?" *The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from the children of the bride-chamber*; language which evidently alludes to his death and the sorrow with which it would fill his disciples.

But how can it any longer be considered as in the least degree incredible that Jesus knew the destiny which awaited him from the very commencement of his career, when it is beyond controversy that he did, early in the second period of it? The causes which authorized him to entertain such an expectation then, were in active operation and well known to him when he entered upon his ministry. He had long been familiar with the spirit of the age, the wicked dispositions of the rulers and the people, and the impetuosity of the Pharisees and Sadducees. What else could have been implied in the prophetic language of Simeon, with which Christ was certainly acquainted, Luke 2: 34, 35, than that a painful exit awaited him? That was the sword which was to pierce through the soul of Mary. And, finally, if we reflect upon the predictions relating to the Messiah contained in the prophets in which his history and destination are clearly pointed out, (*κατα το ὀρίσμενον*, Luke 22: 22,) with which Christ must certainly have been for a long time acquainted when he commenced his public ministry, we shall find that nothing could have been more certain to him than the death to which his calling would subject him.

Moreover, any one who is inclined to admit the supposition which we are here controverting, ought very seriously to consider, how the whole world could have been brought by the united will of the Jewish nation

originated with Bahrdt, upon which the stamp of reprobation has long since been affixed.

to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, without the production of great political commotions, and, indeed, a complete overthrow of the existing state of things. To accomplish such an object, the spiritual authority, which could never have been expected to yield assent to the decision of the nation, must have been entirely destroyed; and this could hardly have been effected without coming in contact with the Roman government by which this authority was recognised and defended. Whither would this have led? How directly opposed would such undertakings have been to Christ's character and what he intended to effect!

The last view which we have to take, is, whether this supposition is reconcilable with the dignity of Christ's character. It is said that the groundless hopes which Jesus first entertained, resulted merely from an error of the understanding, or an opinion too favorable to mankind, benevolent persons often being deceived in this respect, and hence, cast no reflections upon the goodness of his heart; that on the other hand, it proves much to the honor of Jesus, that though he had entertained the highest, earthly hopes, yet he relinquished them as soon as he found that the will of God was different respecting him. But is it very much to be doubted whether even this view of the subject will remove every objection to it out of the way? It must necessarily diminish our reverence for Jesus to admit, that he at least commenced his public career under the influence of vain hopes, and was only brought by a course of time to recognise his delusion to such a degree as to change his mode of thinking and feeling in this respect. This is not the character of a wise mind, perfectly free, clear, and unconstrained. Besides, the hopes here alluded to were not purely spiritual, but mixed with earthly expectations;—expectations of an earthly recognition, which could not have remained in his breast without thoughts of earthly honor and distinction. He who entertains such hopes, does it certainly because he wishes for their accomplishment. Hopes belong more to the heart than

to the understanding. In maintaining that Jesus "received these errors from imbibing the views of his countrymen," we admit him to have been touched and infected with their impure and national spirit, notwithstanding the entire opposition which he ever evinced to it. A heart perfectly pure, preserves the intellect from all the deceptions of false hopes, and what diminishes our esteem towards any one in whom we discover such weakness, is, to find ourselves unwillingly obliged to trace them from the understanding to the heart. Now if Jesus in the last struggle of his soul, was pained at the annihilation of his hopes, and even indulged a momentary anticipation of temporal deliverance, then it affords us proof that he had not even then entirely relinquished them as vain, and that they must have been deeply rooted in his heart, inasmuch as they fluttered before him in the very face of death. Is this reconcilable with the dignity of Christ? Can we admit this and yet retain a full and unlimited reverence for his person?

II. That Christ's plan had the greatest universality, and comprehended all the human race of every age, is a point of the greatest importance in Reinhard's investigation, and hence, it has been clearly and circumstantially developed, pp. 17—28; and had no other passages of the Evangelists been appealed to, but those which properly belong to the subject, it is impossible to see how any one could ever have had any doubts respecting the compass of Christ's plan. Doubts, however, have been raised. It is admitted and must be, that a plan of universal extent is ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels; but, says one, "neither Jesus nor his apostles ever actually had such a comprehensive plan before them, but it was formed in the secret counsels of Providence, who carried the work commenced by Jesus and his apostles to a much greater extent than they ever anticipated, and brought it to an extraordinary result; just as the opposition of Martin Luther to the sale of indulgences proved the means of effecting the reformation. The assertions, therefore, ascribed to Jesus respecting such a plan, es-

pecially in the Gospel of John which was evidently written at a late period, are nothing more than the views of later reporters formed after the event. Paul, however, in particular, contributed towards giving Christianity universal extension, as without him it would probably have always been confined to Syria and Palestine, and have had a corresponding character.”* In support of this opinion, appeals are made in part to the words of Jesus, Matt. 10: 5. 15: 24, the meaning and application of which have already been unfolded by Reinhard, p. 8; and in part to the history of the apostles, which is said clearly to prove, that, during the first years of their ministry, they had no idea of spreading the Gospel among the heathen, and were utterly averse to receiving them into the Christian church; while, had Peter been acquainted with Matt. 28: 19, 20, and believed it to be Christ’s will that he should preach the Gospel to all nations, it is impossible to comprehend why a vision should have been necessary to persuade him to visit the house of Cornelius.

We have, in the first place, to answer these arguments. That Jesus did not permit the apostles to go and preach the Gospel to the heathen at the very commencement of

* Preparation had in some measure been made for this assertion by the Fragment vom Zwecke Jesu, inasmuch as the politico-national plan of Jesus is said to have been first transformed into a universal, spiritual one, by his disciples. Vid. l. c. S. 72 ff. 117 f. Then, the following have expressed the same opinion: Röhr in the Briefe, S. 41. Not. 7. 174. 254. 261, though in doubtful terms; comp. S. 144. 169—171; Kaiser, Bibl. Theologie, I. 15—22. 25—27. 243 f.; Häfeli, Nachgelass. Schriften, herausg. v. Stolz, Winterth., II. 1814—15, B. II. S. 73 f.; the author of the work: Der Zweck Jesu, geschichtlich u. seelkundlich dargestellt, L. 1816, S. 14. 17—19. 104 s. 123. 125; against which work perhaps the Christmass Programma of Tittmann, De Iesu Christo, rerum e consilio patris peragenda vere sibi conscio, 1816, was drawn up; particularly the reviewer of Planck’s Geschichte des Christenthums, during the period of its first introduction into the world by Christ and his apostles, Götting. 1818, II., in the Leipz. L. Z., 1819, Sept. Nr. 240. S. 1917. The following, on the other hand, adhere to Reinhard’s view of the subject: Henke, K. G. I. § 8. S. 40. 5e Ausg.; Linde, in the above, S. 29, and elsewhere; Oertel, Christologie, S. 781—810, where a complete abstract is given of Reinhard; Kestner, Agape, S. 43. Not.; Planck, l. c. Kap. I. VI. XI.—XIII.; and also Hase, Leben Jesu, S. 50 ff.

their labors, was, for the very wise reason, that it was of prime importance to scatter seed and lay a foundation among the Jews before thinking of the conversion of the heathen. The apostles however would have been prevented from all access to the Jews, had they at this very time, opened intercourse with the gentiles. Hence, the rule laid down by Jesus for the direction of his apostles, Matt. 10: 5, was evidently applicable only to their first commission during his lifetime, and not intended for all subsequent periods. "Distingue tempora et concordabit scriptura." The same is also true of Matt. 15: 24.* In this verse, Jesus speaks of the limits to which, during his earthly career, his own personal efforts were to be confined, and not of the whole extent of his commission as a Saviour.—In regard to the apostles, it cannot appear strange to us, that at the commencement of their ministry they confined themselves to the boundaries of Judea, and made it their first object to lay a firm foundation for a church among their own countrymen, and to preserve and strengthen it as soon as it was planted. To infer from their conduct in this respect,

* This passage is a testimony of the faithfulness with which, even in the midst of persecution from which he was obliged to withdraw, Jesus observed that part of his commission which called him to attend personally to his own ungrateful country, and of the purity with which he kept himself from every ambitious desire for extending the sphere of his earthly labors as far as possible;—an example which should serve as a reproof to those men who conduct directly the opposite, and endeavor to extend the sphere of their operations to a great distance, while they leave what lies immediately about them, undone. (Plutarch, De Exil. VIII. 375. *Σπαρταν ἔλαχες, ταύτην κοσμεῖ*.) The apparent hardness of the words addressed to the Canaanitish woman, vanishes, when, with Lavater in his *Vermächtniss an s. Freunde*, II. 139, 140, we suppose, that Christ did not express his own views of the subject, but those of the Jews in general, and intended to try the woman to see whether she would impute to him the same mode of thinking. Or, if this supposition is not authorized by the text and the answer of the woman, perhaps Jesus intended by means of this proverbial comparison, to remind her of the uncleanness and unworthiness of the heathen, and accordingly to bring her to the last and trying test. He, pure and holy as he was, might certainly in the serious language of the law, upbraid sinners with their deep ruin.

that the idea of receiving the heathen into the church was entirely foreign from their minds, we have no authority. Peter speaks of the destination of Christianity to become universal in the very first sermon that he delivered, in which he says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts 2: 39. The *afar off* in this place can be no others than the heathen.* The same is also true of Acts 3: 25, 26, in which he makes the promise given to Abraham, *that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, refer to Christ, and gives us clearly to understand that he looked upon Christ as the Saviour of all nations; and when he adds, "unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus," it is an evident intimation, that, in his time, the Gentiles were also to be called in due order. *When* the apostles were to commence preaching to the heathen, was indeed not yet certainly known to them. They had received no command respecting it from their Lord. It was natural, therefore, that they should wait until they had received a hint from him to this effect, and were called to enter upon the work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. During this first period, also, it could do no injury for them to permit the Jewish Christians to observe the external forms of the Jewish law, and keep out of view all idea of their abolition, although the words of Stephen, Acts 6: 11—14, which the Jews interpreted as scandal, authorize us to conclude that the idea, that the temple was to be destroyed and an end put to the Mosaic constitution, was not altogether a foreign one to the first Christians. In the mean time, the period arrived, when God intended the Gospel should be extended beyond the boundaries of Judea and the heathen called in, and

* With respect to *οἱ ἐς μακρὰν*, compare Isa. 57: 19. Eph. 2: 13, *ἡμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν*, (in which place Wetstein is to be compared, and Schöttgen, *Hor. Hebr.*, I. 761, who from Rabbinical passages, prove, that the Jews called the heathen, *יְהוּדִים*;) for which, in v. 12, we have, *ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*.

then it appeared as if Peter had not concerned himself at all with the thought of receiving the heathen into the bosom of the Church, as if, indeed, he had been totally ignorant of any such intention, Acts 10: 34, 35, and hence, an especial vision was necessary in order to bring him to Cornelius. It is easy however to remove even this suspicion. We may either admit with Semler (*Beantwortung des Fragments*, S. 116 f.) that this vision did not appear for the sake of Peter alone, who, from associating with his master, had long since learned to hold intercourse with the heathen and the Samaritans, but for the sake of weak Jewish Christians, who considered it unlawful to associate with foreigners in domestic life; or, if the vision was necessary for Peter himself, it should be recollected, that, though the idea of the heathen's being called in, was not a new one to him, yet the execution of it, partly on account of his deep-rooted, national aversion to the heathen in general, and partly on account of his fearfulness and timidity at the offence which it would create among the zealous, Jewish Christians, might appear difficult, and render a vision necessary for giving him a strong impulse and enabling him to overcome every thing like prejudice.* This object was accomplished, and a beginning actually made by Peter at converting the gentiles. Those who contended with him about it, Acts 11: 2, were not the apostles, who would not have been called οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς, but they were other Jewish Christians, probably such as were attached to the Pharisees, as from Acts 15: 5, we learn that some of this sect rose up against the apostles.

* The words "of a truth I perceive," ἐπ' ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι, Acts 10: 34, need not be supposed to imply that Peter had now obtained this view of the subject for the first time, but may properly be understood as referring to a conviction rendered more perceptible by the thing itself, and a living and confirmed apprehension of the truth. Ernesti, *Neueste Theol. Bibliothek*, III. 72; nunc factō, ipso usu intelligo; now I am taught by the thing itself, now I see from a plain and obvious example, namely, the truth of what I was formerly taught by Jesus, that God, &c. Storr, *Observatt. ad Analog. et Syntax. Hebr.*, p. 8; penitius intelligo.

If the arguments which have now been examined are not sufficient to prove that the expressions contained in Christ's discourses, indicative of the greatest universality, were a *post factum* interpolation, then, on the other hand, there are the strongest reasons to be brought forward against this supposition, and in support of the conviction, that Jesus himself has clearly spoken of the universality of his plan. That declarations of this kind are to be met with chiefly or especially in the Gospel of John, is not a fact, but is opposed to ocular testimony. Should any one be inclined to count them, it is a question, whether he would not find the number of such passages the most numerous in the three first Gospels. But of what use is it to do so? It is enough that the number of those expressions which go to prove the universality of Christ's plan, is exceedingly great. And were none of them uttered by Christ himself? Were they all foisted into his discourses in the first place, by the Evangelists? Can we imagine that they may have done this in total ignorance? or, if they were conscious of doing it, can we reconcile such conduct with their honesty? If so, it would follow, that the apostles far exceeded Jesus in mental cultivation and benevolent extension of thought, as his unlimited plan would have derived its greatness and extent from them in the first place, and this, to every considerate man would be a manifest absurdity. What militates most decidedly against the pretension that Christ's discourses were thus interpolated or extended, is the fact, that these expressions are so thoroughly and firmly interwoven with the whole construction and the historical incidents of every discourse, as to render it necessary for him, who imagines a few single words or phrases to have been added, also to admit that these discourses, historical narratives and parables, were either forged or have been totally disfigured. This can be rendered evident by various examples. How naturally is Christ's expression, Matt: 8: 11: 12, respecting the admission of the heathen into the kingdom of heaven and the exclusion of the Jews, occasioned by the admiration

into which he had just been thrown by observing the strength of a heathen's faith! How exactly does the similar expression, Matt. 21: 43, that the kingdom of God should be taken from the Jews and given to the heathen, correspond with what is said in the parable, v. 41, respecting the husbandman and his vineyard! How intimately is a similar denunciation, Luke 13: 28—30, connected with his answer to a question which had just been proposed to him, vs. 23—27! Who in such and similar cases can point out the least traces of later additions obviously made by a foreign hand? And what shall we say of the parables, in which, under figurative representations, Christ so often represents his kingdom as designed to embrace all mankind? When he explains the field as meaning the world, Matt. 13: 38, and compares his church to a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which, though the least of all seeds, when grown, is a tree of such great extent, that the birds of the air come and make nests in the branches of it, 31, 32;—when, in the parable of the vineyard, Matt. 21: 33—41, and that of the royal marriage, 22: 1—10, he exhibits the alternating destiny of the Jews and heathen;—when, in Luke 15: 11—32, under the image of a younger son, he so touchingly portrays the actual return of the heathen to the house of their Father, God;—do none of these parables originate with Jesus himself? Have they all been foisted into his discourses by the Evangelists? What a strange, presumptuous, gratuitous supposition is this! 'The most important of Christ's directions, Matt. 28: 18—20, also bears the internal characteristics of genuineness. It is perfectly connected in itself, and corresponds exactly with similar directions in Mark 16: 15. Luke 24: 47. John 20: 21—23. As to those expressions of Jesus respecting his kingdom which are to be met with in John, it may be observed, that they are not less intimately interwoven with the context of the discourses in which they are to be found in this Gospel, than those in the others. The discourse of Jesus contained in the third chapter of

John, respecting which we made some remarks, p. 284, is distinguished for its progression and the manner in which he gradually opens a wide and clear prospect to the still contracted mind of Nicodemus. After having assured this ruler that the *lifting up*, (v. 14) or the *giving* (v. 16) of the Son of man was necessary in order that *whosoever* believed in him should be saved, (v. 15) Jesus gives him a full explanation of the meaning of this phraseology, which was doubtless strange to him, by asserting in vs. 16, 17, that the love of God extended to all, and that the Son of God had not been sent into the world for its punishment, as the Jews thought, but for its salvation. Now who, in a discourse so clearly and closely connected as this is, can discern the garbling hand of an interpolator? And yet were any part of it interpolated we should certainly discover its traces. We go on to the fourth chapter. In what a natural and easy manner is the important declaration of Jesus, vs. 21—24, brought in by way of reply to the question of the Samaritan woman? and how plainly does it refer to a universal worship of God,—a worship, to be limited to no place? What reason is there for any suspicion that this dialogue has received any ornamental touches from a second hand? We find the same to be true also with respect to chap. vi; in which, by way of contrast with the manna procured for the people by Moses, Christ, with perfect ease, introduces a description of the spiritual bread which is presented in himself and is indispensable to all, and carries it through his entire discourse. Chap. 10: 16 contains one of the clearest expressions respecting those who are considered as belonging to his kingdom. Can this verse be excepted as a base interpolation and at variance with all the rest? The same question may be repeated with respect to chap. 12: 23, 24, where the *much fruit* which the death of Christ was to bring forth, certainly refers to something more than merely to the Jewish nation, and where these words are most intimately connected with the visit of the Greeks, v. 20, which occasioned them. In chap. 14: 12, the single sentence, “He that believeth on me shall do greater

works than those which I do,"* has a definite reference to the blessed effects which should attend the labors of the apostles among the heathen, and is a sentence which no interpolator would ever have thought of falsely ascribing to Christ. The prayer which Christ uttered, chap. xvii., will certainly produce an impression upon every susceptible reader, which must constrain him to admit, that it flowed from Christ's very heart, and yet, even this contains traces of a heart in Jesus which embraced all men in its grasp, vs. 2, 18, 20, 21, 23. And, finally, the testimony which Christ bore in the presence of Pilate respecting the purely spiritual nature of his kingdom and its destination to become more extensive than all the other kingdoms of the world, chap. 18: 36, 37, bears upon the very face of it, marks of the dignified character of its author. Now he, who declares all these expressions of Christ, by no means few in number, to be spurious, to be additions made by reporters, notwithstanding their internal marks of truth and the close connexion in which they stand with the context of the rest of the discourse,—he, who does this, if he does not wish strong expressions and wilful hypotheses to pass for valid proof, is bound to support his assertion by clear and convincing arguments. Until he does so, we are justified in putting perfect confidence in the accounts of the Evangelists.

And this we are justified in doing so much the more from the fact, that these accounts respecting the universality of Christ's plan harmonize completely with the other contents of the Gospels. The supposition that Jesus intended to labor for the salvation of all mankind, agrees with the spirit of what he taught; whereas the

* The word *μετ' οὐρα* in this place cannot refer to miracles, for in this respect, the apostles did nothing which could be denominated greater than what Christ did; but it must be taken in an absolute sense. Christ speaks of what was to be effected in the spiritual world, or of the regeneration of the heathen, which would be a greater miracle than any of those which he performed in the visible world, and consequently in this respect, he was to be excelled by the apostles. Comp. Storr, Opusc. Acad. III. 151—155.

opposite does not. The religion which he made known was in every respect adapted to become the religion of the world. It satisfies all the religious necessities of our hearts. The position, that the paternal love of God extends to all, is one of the most definite marks of its universal character. Now are we not authorized from this to draw an inference as to the similar character of its founder? Had his intentions been limited to his own people, his religion would also have assumed a national character. The universality of a system of religion, however, constrains us to admit that its author's plan was also universal. The same is likewise true of the manner in which Christ speaks of himself. He lays claim to the qualities, dignity and authority, of an exalted, superhuman, and divine personage; (as may here be taken as a lemma from the Articles of faith.) If we admit this, we must accede to Christ the dignity of a universal Saviour. If he represents himself as the supreme messenger of God, as having come from heaven itself, can he have any thing less in view than the good of all men? He lays claim to all power in heaven and earth. What else can he intend than that all shall submit to him? He calls himself the future judge of man. Does not this presuppose a general relation in which he stands to all men, and a universal extension of the word by means of which they are to be brought to recognise him as such? He asserts his aid to be indispensable to the happiness of all, and represents himself alone as having opened a way to the Father. How could he say in plainer terms that he is a universal Saviour? And, finally, he affirms that He is the Saviour announced by the prophets;—that in him those prophecies are fulfilled. They, however, are unquestionably of universal application and speak in the clearest terms of the salvation, not of the Israelitish nation merely, but of all nations. He, therefore, who declares himself to be the object of these prophecies, must have had a definite plan in view for effecting the salvation of all men. In short, the whole picture which the Evangelists have spread open before us respecting Jesus, must be altogether a false and dis-

figured one, and besides, have been invented by men entirely destitute of art, if that which constitutes its principal trait,—a heart filled with love and a warm regard for the interests of the whole human race—was added by another hand.

C. p. 85.

Respecting the hypothesis of the early extension of Christianity by means of a secret order.

THAT Jesus never once availed himself of the assistance of a secret order for the execution of his plan, has been shown by Reinhard in opposition to Bahrtdt, in a very clear and convincing manner, pp. 84—112. The hypothesis proposed by Kestner in his *Agape*,* may be considered as a good piece to hang up by the side of Bahrtdt's; for though the plan of spreading Christianity over the world by means of a secret society, is not, in this case, ascribed to Jesus, yet it is ascribed to apostolical men of the first century. The essential parts of this hypothesis, at which Wieland had already hinted,† are here given in the author's own words, S. 17—22.

“Clement, a Roman patrician, after the death of those zealous apostles, Peter and Paul his instructors, de-

* *Die Agape oder der geheime Weltbund der Christen, von Klemens in Rom unter Domitians Regierung gestiftet, dargestellt von Dr. August Kestner, ausserord. Prof. d. Th. (died. 27th Oct. 1821, in the 27th year of his age,) Jena, 1819.* This hypothesis is not only unanimously rejected by the reviewers of this work, *Der Gött. Anz.*, 1820, St. 3; *Hall. L. Z.*, 1820, N. 1—3; *Hermes*, 1819, St. 4. S. 285—299; *Jen. L. Z.*, 1819, Novemb., N. 201—203; *Leipz. L. Z.*, 1821, Octb., N. 272, 273; but it is expressly opposed in the *Programmata* of Eichstädt: “*Lucianus num scriptis suis adjuvare religionem Christianam voluerit,*” *Ien.*, 1820; and the *Exercitationes Antonininae*, I—VI., *Ien.*, 1821.

† In the Uebersetzung des Lucian, III. 59—64. 101 f., and in the *Geheime Geschichte des Philosophen Peregrinus Proteus*, L. II. 1790. *Sammtl. Werke*, B. 33 u. 34.

vised a plan for effecting a revolution of the state of things in the world, which should procure for the to him sacred cause of Christianity, the victory over the religions; practical principles, moral habits, and the institutions of old times, and render a Christian mode of thinking and acting, the all-pervading spirit of a later age. By means of a secret society, throughout the Roman empire, the strict discipline of which should accustom irregular and unrestrained people to order and the performance of duty, gradually moralize the legal, and at the same time, prepare the morally strong by carrying them through the degrees of a symbolical, mystical system of instruction, for the overthrow of the old, politico-religious government of the world, and station every one, susceptible of entering into the revolutionary plan, at a definite post of the organized machinery of this united body, when in active operation;—by means of such a secret association, this acute, political man, animated by the religion of Jesus, supposed he should be able to obtain a decisive triumph for the Christian cause, and one which would conduce to the welfare of the human race. The destruction of Jerusalem gave the first signal for the establishment of this Christian confederacy embracing the whole world, and, under the despotic reign of Domitian, when all nations and countries were sighing after an improvement in the state of things, it was easily put into operation. By a multitude of writings fabricated agreeably to the spirit of the age and the object of the confederacy, and attributed to the names of Christians every where honored; by the introduction of a new mode of interpreting the genuine books of the prophets and apostles, invented for the purpose of favoring the cause of the confederacy, as well as by wise, faithful, and powerful aids in many regions, Clement was enabled, in the first place, to unite the different apostolical sects into one body, and regulate and discipline them all agreeably to his will and in accordance with the requisitions of the so called Apostolical Constitution of his confederacy. At the same time, the extension of Jewish and heathen, pro-

phetical writings, either interpolated by Christians or newly fabricated for the purpose, gained many Jews and gentiles over to the interest of the Christian cause. Then, some of the Clementinian confederates by their cunning, purloined the records and private books of the so called Secret Society of Theologians established by John the Evangelist; and the founder of the confederacy connected the consecrating ritual of John's mysteries, with Jewish and heathen ceremonies and mystical symbols of a masonical character, and thus, after establishing a Christian priesthood, ordained a mysterious worship of God, which was introduced by its missionaries and abettors, into all parts of the then civilized world, in Palestine and in Spain, on the Euphrates and on the Rhine, with the full approbation of all religious parties and ranks. Upon the martyrdom of Clement, his undertaking, difficult as it was, had been so far realized, that the brotherhood which he had founded had been extended into all regions of the world, and, according to a probable estimate, numbered over a million of firm adherents.

Domitian discovered the existence of this secret confederacy without being able to touch it. The hoary Nerva was raised to the throne by its members, and he suffered them to act for a long time in quiet.

Trajan persecuted them according to military regulations as state criminals, and his political measures succeeded in enabling him to seize the authors and heads of this confederacy and punish many thousands of its members with exile and death.

The confederacy of brethren, being shaken by this persecution, contrived, under a mask of societies of operative mechanics, in which they concealed themselves, to obtain the favor of Hadrian, who was a lover of the mechanical arts.

Under Antoninus Pius, who caused the Christian confederacy to be guarded with great strictness as far as politics were concerned, but who looked upon its members as at heart worshippers of God, they endeavored to justify themselves in the eyes of the government, by

numerous apologies written in their own defence and sent to it, from the different regions where they resided ; while many powerful men made their appearance in the different Christian sects, who, sustained by Lucian, carried on a spiritual contest with rich success against the system of conceptions and the mode of life peculiar to the Jewish, heathen, and Christiano-Gnostic contemporaries.

Marcus Aurelius caused himself to be initiated into the mysteries of Christians, carried on a correspondence, and held intercourse with many of them, and while at the head of government conducted as their protector ; and, having with great consideration completed his preparations for the purpose, he would, for moral-religious reasons, have made Christianity the state religion of the Roman empire, if he had not been prevented from so doing by the prevalence of the too powerful anti-christian spirit of the age, and been overtaken in the midst of warlike enterprises by a sudden death.

Even down to the reign of Antoninus, the followers of Clement by means of their authority, continued to hold this immense confederacy attached both internally and externally to its presidential chair at Rome, though it cost much trouble to do so, and they could secure their authority only by very sly and artful means. When Pius, however, with an almost papal arrogance, began to issue decrees for the whole confederacy of Christians, the result was its severance for the first time,—a severance which could be healed again only by the aged Polycarp, who was one of the first spreaders of the *Agape*, and by the calmness and forbearance of Anicetus the succeeding Roman President. With greater danger was the confederacy threatened on the part of the Montanistic rebellion, which continued to foment within the pale of the *Agape*, until the rebels were rejected from all connexion with those who had been enabled, not more by their revolutionary power than their spiritual superiority, to obtain a victory for the religion of Jesus, over the almost expiring spirit of ancient times."

This hypothesis was brought forward in part, for the purpose of opposing the assertions of Reinhard, p. 105, and with reference to it, the author has expressed great confidence. "We rejoice," says he, (Agape, S. 165 f. Anm.) "to receive the wished for result of Reinhard's investigation, that *Jesús never intended to put the hidden springs of a secret society in motion for the execution of his plan*, (p. 112.) A thorough investigator, however, will doubtless find the views which I have now presented respecting the formation of a secret society by a man who was not even one of Christ's disciples, not to be altogether destitute of foundation, provided the inquiry come within the sphere to which his labors have been confined and he enter upon it with judgement and experience." It seems to be proper, therefore, in this place, to give a short and connected representation of the main points to be attended to, in a critical examination of this hypothesis, and it will be such an one, I hope, as would accord with the views of Reinhard, were he living.

The first question that forces itself upon every one who enters upon this examination, is: From what sources was this hypothesis drawn? And here it must appear strange to every one, that the author has drawn it for the most part, from writings admitted to be spurious, or at least, very greatly interpolated, by the unanimous decision of Catholic theologians as well as Protestant. He makes use of the Recognitions of Clement (S. 27, 28) as a sure source of the history of this man, though they are nothing more than a Christian romance, which was composed according to Mosheim, (*De turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia*, § 34, in the *Dissertatt. ad Hist. Eccl.*, I. 174—192,) in the third century of the Christian era, by a Platonizing Jew of Alexandria; or, according to Neander, (*Gnostische Systeme*, S. 361 ff., and *K. G. I.* 2. 620,) by an Ebionite, at the close of the second.* He takes it for granted, also, (S. 38. 55.

* Hence Tzschirner also, *Fall des Heidenthums*, I. 382, has censured this abuse.

219,) that the first letters of Isidore's Decretals, which have been ascribed to this same Clement, are, in a great measure, genuine; whereas, it is necessary to read only the first of the Decretal letters addressed to the apostle James, even as translated by Rufinus, and compare it with the first and genuine Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, in order to find irrefragable proof that this father was not its author, as is now acknowledged by all able critics, both Catholic and Protestant.* He uses the fragment of a commentary upon the Revelation of John taken from Fabricius, *Codex Apocr. N. T.*, III. 721, and said to have been written by Cæcilius a pupil of James, S. 94, without saying a single word respecting what Fabricius adds, p. 722—724, that this fragment which was found in Spain belongs to the 16th century. He considers the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite as the genuine productions of this pupil of the apostle Paul, (S. 231. 291,) without paying any attention to the irrefutable arguments of those who assign it to the fourth century or one still later.† These facts are sufficient of themselves to excite a suspicion as to the correctness of the author's supposition.

Let us ask, however, what he has discovered favorable to it in the memorials of church history, whether genuine or spurious? And here it is to be wished that the author had followed the excellent rule laid down by Pe-

* The Epist. I. Clementis ad Jacobum, is to be found in Cotelieri PP. Apost., I. 611—614, ed. Cler. prim., and also together with the other epistles in the Collections of Councils, e. g. in Harduin, I. 39—62; also printed at large in Dav. Blondel's *Pseudo-Isidorus et Turrianus vapulantes*, Genev., 1628, 4. S. 1—100, whose arguments I. Wilh. Ianus, in the *Disp. de Barbaria medii ævi*, p. 24, pronounced invictæ demonstrationes, which Catholics also admit. Comp. Ittig. *De PP. Apost.*, p. 107 seqq.; Schröckh, K. G. XXII. 14 ff.; Planck, *Gesch. der christl. kirchl. Gesellschafts-Verfassung*, II. 806—828.

† In addition to Schröckh, K. G. XVII. 367—370, comp. Neander, K. G. II. 2. 747 ff., especially the *Acta Sanctor. Mens. Octob. Tom. IV.* 802—856, where the writings of Dionysius are treated of in a minute and thorough manner. Döderlein gives an abstract in the *Theol. Bibliothek*, II. 181—187.

ter in the Recognitions of Clement,* and kept it before him as valid. In every instance, he is obliged to foist in his preconceived notion respecting an Agape-confederacy. In no case, is a remote hint expressed in relation to it. This assertion of mine is the result of an examination of the most important testimonies to which he has resorted. As the first of these, and which the author himself, S. 10 ff., calls, "the first key to the secret mine of historical notices respecting the Christian confederacy," he adduces the commencement of Origen's work against Celsus. In this passage, he represents the latter as reproaching Christians with having a secret and unlawful confederacy, and Origen† as admitting that Celsus refers in what he says to the so called Agape of Christians, or to obligations of a stronger character, than ordinary, confederate oaths, into which they had mutually entered, on account of the common danger to which they were exposed, and says: "From the whole context of the passage it is perfectly evident that *αγαπη* in this place, does not

* *Recognitiones*, l. X. c. 42, Cotelier. I. 591. "Petrus ait: Multas, ut video, ingeniosi homines, ex his, quae legunt, verisimilitudines capiunt; et ideo diligenter observandum est, ut Lex Dei cum legitur, non secundum proprii ingenii intelligentiam legatur. Sunt enim multa verba in Scripturis divinis, quae possunt trahi ad eum sensum, quem sibi unusquisque sponte praesumsit: quod fieri non oportet. Non enim sensum, quem extrinsecus attuleris, alienum et extraneum debes quaerere, quem ex Scripturarum auctoritate confirmes; sed ex ipsis Scripturis sensum capere veritatis: et ideo oportet ab eo intelligentiam discere Scripturarum, qui eam a majoribus, secundum veritatem sibi traditam servat: ut et ipse possit ea quae recte suscepit, competentur adserere." This passage is also to be met with in the fifth epistle of Clement, in Harduin, p. 62, and in Blondel, p. 98; and when Kestner, S. 157, Not. 226, says of Bahrdr, "that none but a frivolous investigator possessed of acute wit unseasonably applied, can, sustained by passages drawn from the New Testament, represent Jesus as having been the head of a secret order,"—Who will not throw the remark back again upon himself?

† *Orig. contra Cels.*, I. 1. Opp. I. 319. Πρωτον τῷ Κέλσῳ κεφαλαιον ἐστὶ βουλευμενῷ διαβαλεῖν Χριστιανισμον, ὡς συνθῆκας κρυβδῆν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ποιουμένων Χριστιανῶν παρὰ τὰ νομιμισμένα, ὅτι τῶν συνθῆκῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι φανεραὶ, ὅσαι κατὰ νομοὺς γίνονται· αἱ δὲ ἀφανεῖς, ὅσαι παρὰ τὰ νομιμισμένα συντελούνται. Καὶ βουλεται διαβαλεῖν τὴν καλουμένην Ἀγαπὴν Χριστιανῶν, πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀπο τοῦ κοινου κινδυνου ὑψίσταταιν, καὶ δυναμένην ὑπερορχία·

mean *Christian love*, as this could not be designated as *so called*, but the *Love-confederacy*." The unprejudiced reader, however, will readily perceive, that he has not only represented the whole passage in a wrong light, but also given an incorrect meaning to single words. (1) Origen does not in any respect seem to admit the reproach of Celsus to be well founded. "The prime object with Celsus," says he, "is to calumniate Christianity by representing Christians as secretly, and hence, illegally confederated together;" and anticipating that the reader would inquire for what purpose this groundless reproach was made, he adds: (2) "He wishes to bring suspicion upon the love of Christians so celebrated as binding them together in the hour of danger with more firmness than any oath." The great love of Christians was often spoken of by the heathen, with astonishment and aversion.* The term *αγαπη*, however, may be understood of the *Love-feast* as it is used of this institution in general, even in the singular number; being so used by Tertullian, Apologet. c. 39. (3) When Origen speaks of this *αγαπη*, as being *καλου-μενη*, he evidently means that it was something talked of, and, consequently, something that must have been well known; which could not have been said of a secret order. (4) As he speaks of this love being stronger than an oath, it follows, that he cannot have had reference to any order into which persons were initiated by means of a solemn oath. (5) Immediately after, Origen speaks of a covenant into which Christians had absolutely entered

* Tertullian, Apologet. c. 39. After having described the charity-tax of Christians, he adds: "Sed ejusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio *notam nobis inurit* penes quosdam. Vide, inquit, ut invicem se diligant; (ipsi enim invicem oderunt) et ut pro alterutro mori sint parati; (ipsi enim ad occidendum alterutrum paratiores erunt).—Minucius Felix, in Octavio, c. 31. Sic mutuo, *quod doletis*, amore diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus: sic nos, *quod invidetis*, fratres vocamus, et unius Dei parentis homines, ut consortes fidei, ut spei cohaeredes."—Julianus in Fragm. Orationis Epistolaeve in fin. Opp. ed. Spanh. 305. Τον αυτον και αυτοι [Christiani] τροπον αρξαμετοι δια της λεγομενης παρ' αυτοις αγαπης και υποδοχης και διακονιας τραπεζων πιστους ενγαγον εις την αθεοτητα.

with each other in opposition to the tyrants of the world, to Satan, and falsehood. (6) Finally, it is evident both from the accusation of Celsus, and Origen's answer to it, that the whole discourse had reference to Christians at large, as being firmly united together by love, and not to a secret and select number of Christians, constituting an order among themselves. Thus little can there be gathered from the principal passage to which Kestner appeals in proof of the existence of a secret confederacy. Much less can there be gathered from the others. Without any authority and contrary to the import of the language and the connexion of the discourse, he makes the word *αγαπη*, mean a secret confederacy. Thus, S. 13, the passage; (Martyr. Clem. Cotel. PP. Ap. I. 808, extra. marginal reading,) in which, after having described Clement's zeal to effect the conversion of all, the writer says of him; *ὕπο παντων τε αγαπωμενος, παντας τη εις Χριστον αγαπη συνδειν εποιετο σπουδην· ηγαπουν μεν αυτον οι Έλληνες* etc., is rendered: "He exerted himself to unite all together in the *Αγαπη*;"—as if the clause, *εις Χριστον*, (which in this case is prudently omitted, but, on p. 36, is translated, "the Agape-confederacy resting upon Christ,") were not the object of the love, and as if the preceding *αγαπωμενος*, and the succeeding *ηγαπουν*, did not require the usual signification of *αγαπη*. In the superscription of the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, (Col. II. 26,) among various other titles given the Romish church, is that of *προκαθημενη της Αγαπης*, which is rendered, "The superintendent of the Agape;" and yet from the other predicates, it is evident, that this phrase designates nothing more than the precedency in love, and is intended merely to imply that this church excelled others in love, as in the very beginning of the epistle, it is said; *φοβουμαι την αγαπην υμων, μη αυτη με αδικηση*, (I fear your love will hold me back from martyrdom.) The beginning of Ignatius' Epistle to the Magnesians, (Cotel. II. 55,) *γνους υμων το πολυευτακτον της κατα θεον αγαπης*, is said to mean: "When I heard that the Agape was well regulated among you;" whereas the neg-

lected words, *κατα θεον*, show that he speaks of love to God. The same remark may be made respecting, *παρακαλω υμας, ουκ εγω, αλλ' η αγαπη*, I. X., (Ep. ad Trall. c. 6.; Cotel. p. 65,) which is evidently an imitation of Phil. 2: 1; and also, *μηποτε θλιβεντες εξασθενησετε εν τη αγαπη· αλλα παντες επι το αυτο γινεσθε*, (Ep. ad Philad. c. 6; p. 83,) which is an imitation of Phil. 2: 2. But to adduce a few other instances of capricious interpretation: On p. 51 f., Barnabas, in a single isolated fragment,* which runs thus: "In wicked combats the conqueror is the most unfortunate, for he goes away with the most sins upon his head," is said to have expressed his first thoughts respecting a dangerous confederacy!!—On p. 54, after having mentioned the 2d Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, the genuineness of which was called in question at a very early period, he says: "All at once the Epistle closes like a fragment. In thought, however, we read farther, and feel persuaded that Clement, after having given this circumstantial preface and introduction, in which allusion is often [? not at all] made to the Agape, went on to lay down his plan for connecting a select number of Christians together in the Agape-confederacy." And thus one can read every thing, if he reads according to his own thoughts.—He proceeds in the same manner in making use of the work entitled, *Pastor Hermae*, or *the Shepherd of Hermas*; which, S. 78, Anm., is called "a masonic book," because in it the Agape-confederacy is represented, as he thinks, under the figure of a tower. This book, however, contains not the least intimation respecting a secret confederacy. It is altogether of a moral, ascetical tendency, and the comparison or allegory of a tower referred to, is nothing more than a farther painting out of 1 Pet. 2: 5.† Even the books of the New Testament,

* Grabe, Spicileg. SS. PP. I. 302. *Βαρναβας ο Αποστολος εφη· εν αιμιλλαις πονηραις αθλιωτερος ο νικησας, διοτι επερχεται πλεον εχων της αμαρτιας*. It is taken from a codex which contains an alphabetical collection of sentences taken from sacred and profane writers.

† The word *αγαπη* is certainly to be met with in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which the reviewer in the *Hermes*, denied; lib. I. c. 8. Cotel.

however, are resorted to by the author, and made to exhibit traces of the pretended confederacy. The 2d Epistle of Peter, the Epistle of Jude, (vid. S. 85—87. and 221—226. 117,) as also the Epistle to the Hebrews, (S. 114—116. 192—200,) are said to be the productions of this confederacy, written either by Clement, or under his direction. The first of these epistles he supposes, (S. 86,) to have been sent to the hesitating members of the confederacy for the purpose of confirming them. The seven virtues named, 2 Pet. 1: 5—7, and also Hermas, Past. I. Vis. III. c. 8, he represents as the seven genii, to which, those who enter the confederacy were obliged to swear allegiance; so that *επιχορηγειν*, (v. 5,) probably refers to the choral dances which the genii of these virtues conducted in the Clementinian mysteries (!). In verses 6, 7, he finds that the *Agape* not without allusion to the secret orders of John which rose up against it, is placed far above the *Gnosis*. [Has Paul a similar allusion, 1 Cor. 8: 1 ?] This, however, is far surpassed by what is said (S. 114) to be contained in Heb. 6: 10, where the text is changed without any authority whatever, and *ενεδεξασθε* substituted for *ενεδειξασθε*; “a word” adds he, “which the transcribers could not understand without an acquaintance with the confederacy;” [as if the connexion of the terms, *εργου, κοπου, and διακονησαντες* did not refer to the active love of the Hebrews.] In chap. 5: 12, the writer of the epistle is said to regret, that though the time was near in which the brethren of the confederacy ought to be advanced to the *Master's degree of the Agape*, yet they were still employed in acquiring the first principles of the very lowest degree of the confederacy! According to p. 115, chapters VI. and VII. speak of Christian priests whose oath of allegiance to the constitution of the confederacy, *λογος ορκωμοσιας*, c. VII. 28, had higher significancy than the conse-

I. 81. Caritas, for which in the Greek text preserved by Clement of Alexand. Strom. II. 384 s., Sylb., we find *αγαπη*, means love, and is named with other virtues as the fruit of faith.

crating ritual by which the old Hebrew priests were inducted into office ; [and yet the discourse speaks of only one high priest,] and according to p. 116, in chap. 12: 4—12, the readers were admonished not to take offence at *the strict discipline of the confederacy*, and according to p. 196 f. and 273, chap. 12: 18—24 give a description of the awful rites of initiation into the new mysteries, the symbolical scenery of which he interprets of the new church (the Christian confederacy,) and the New Jerusalem, (the goal of the confederacy.) The person received is said to have been led to a smoking and ignivomous mountain, been exposed to an unexpected storm and the sound of trumpets, and to have had his attention directed to the calling and singing of thundering voices approaching at a great distance &c ; [here the author must have entirely overlooked the negation of the 16th verse in order to be able to deduce such theatrical and foolish play from the passage !] These examples will suffice to show how the words of the ancient writers have been abused in this work !

But we ask farther ; where is there any testimony that *Clement* was the founder of this secret confederacy ? There is a not a single intimation to this effect which can be relied on. It is uncertain even, whether this bishop of Rome was a Roman, and as such, possessed of superior education, political acuteness, and versatility. According to Tillemont,* who has carefully collected together every thing relative to Clement, it is rather probable (from I. Ep. Clem. ad Cor. c. 4. Cotel. I. 148, *ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἰακωβ*,) that he was a Jew.† Be this, however, as it may, the

* Mémoires pour servir a l'histoire eccles. des six premiers siècles, Tom. II. p. 162 seqq.; original ed. publ. at Paris.

† Hess, Gesch. u. Schriften der Apostel, III. 542, (or 541, 4te A.) "In general, this epistle of Clement has too much Jewish splendor about it to have been written by a native and well educated Roman, as Clement by many has been considered, though it is not composed altogether in the style and manner of the Apostles. It is not unworthy however in this respect, of an overseer of the church for which a Peter and Paul had labored, of which also honorable mention is made.

only piece of his to which we can appeal with confidence in reference to him, is his 1 Epistle to the Corinthians, and the allusions of this epistle to the Agape according to Kestner himself, S. 14f. are somewhat obscure. Many passages, however, are unhesitatingly referred to the Christian confederacy. And what? we ask. The exhortations, c. 21, 32, and especially c. 49, (Cotel. I. 175,) in which Clement, making an appropriate use of the apostle's representation of love or charity, 1 Cor. XIII., exhorts the Corinthian Christians who were then divided with bickerings and party-spirit, to the duty of charity. No one that reads this epistle can discover a single hint in any passage respecting an order. Every thing that is said of the *αγαπη*, is said, as is evident from the connexion, solely of the virtue of love, and in many cases this word if taken in the signification of a secret confederacy would make nonsense. The traces of a hierarchical spirit and state of things are likewise very weak. Chap. 40, extr. p. 169, is nothing more than a comparison with the regulations of the Old Testament to show the order which should exist in divine worship in the Christian church. In chap. 37, subordination, and reverence towards overseers and elders is recommended, and that very appropriately; as, according to c. 47, p. 174, a spirit of insurrection against the elders had broken out among the Corinthians, (*στασιαζειν προς τους πρεσβυτερους.*) The whole epistle is written with such plainness and sobriety, and in so mild and modest a spirit, that it is difficult for any one to impute to its author the deep and cunningly concerted plan of a secret order. There is as little to be gathered from the *Recognitions*, provided it should be considered as a sure source of the history of Clement, respecting his having established an order.

And farther; how could an order, which, at the beginning of the second century (S. 164) extended from Jerusalem and Alexandria to Lyons, from the Pillars of Hercules to the regions of Pontus, and had members from all ranks and classes of people, whether Jews, heathen, or Christians, (S. 163) in number over a million, have

continued to keep its existence so secret that none of its transactions should ever have been betrayed?—so secret, that it could escape the searching eyes of the Roman police? How is it possible to conceive that Trajan, if he had had any intimations of the existence of this confederacy, and had discovered traitors among Christians sworn to oppose the emperor and the empire, could have given orders, that they should not be looked up? (Plin. Ep. X. 98. *Conquirendi non sunt: si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt*;) that they should be punished only for their obstinacy and headstrong superstition, and because they would not render the usual honor to the genius of the emperor; but in case they renounced their faith, should be dismissed?*. Why in general were they never accused of being engaged in such a dangerous, political confederacy, and hence, rejected by their apologists? For the expressions, *factio, coitio, conspiratio*, which were applied to Christians, had no reference to a secret order in Christianity, but were applied to all Christians in general, inasmuch as they were intimately united together, and kept themselves separate from heathenism; and the author is altogether incorrect, when (S. 16, 17,) he says, “Tertullian, Apologet., c. 39, admits, that a portion of the Christian sects constituted a state party,” as he spoke this of the great body of Christians as is evident from the whole chapter, but especially from the conclusion: “In cuius perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc sumus congregati, quod et dispersi: *hoc universi, quod et singuli*; neminem laedentes, neminem contristantes. Cum probi, cum boni cœunt, cum pii, cum casti congregantur, non est factio dicenda, sed curia.”

The phenomena in the Christian church which (S. 3 ff.) are said not to have been intelligible until the existence of the secret confederacy was discovered, are in

* Tertullian, ad Scapul. (ab init.) ed. Rigalt. p. 85s. “Circa majestatem imperatoris infamamur: tamen nunquam Albiniani, nec Nigriani, vel Cassiani inveniri potuerunt Christiani.—Christianus nullius est hostis, nedum imperatoris: quem sciens a Deo suo constitui, necesse est ut et ipsum diligit, et revereatur, et honoret et salvum velit.

part, dated too early, and, in part, can be perfectly explained without this hypothesis. The hierarchical form of the church and the regulation respecting the ranks of the spiritual class began to be introduced in the second century, and were the gradual and spontaneous result of the increase of Christian society, and the forcible introduction by the priesthood, of Jewish and heathen notions which derived their sustenance from the natural ambition of mankind. The same causes also in conjunction with the unity of Christianity itself and the living sensibility with which believers, strangers, as they were, and oppressed, in the world, were animated as a community, necessarily gave rise to a closer and closer external connexion, though the churches were by no means divested of all freedom nor delivered from all difference of belief at the close of the second century. The increasing strictness of church discipline, was the result of the moral fervor with which the community, in proportion to its danger and the attention fixed upon it, was obliged to watch over its purity. Some particular regulations of the Christian church may also have been derived from the synagogue.

To these historical reasons, however, there are other reasons which may justly be added, sufficient in themselves, to secure the heart in a great measure, against the reception of this hypothesis. How is it possible to reconcile the idea that the pupils of the apostles considered it necessary and lawful for them to employ such miserable and human means as a secret order must have been, which made it one of its maxims to murder tyrants, to procure the victory for Christianity, of whose divinity they were convinced, (S. 101 f. 122 ;)*—how is it possi-

* The assertion of Origen *contra Cels.* I. 1. p. 320, may strike one as suspicious: *ὥστε γὰρ, εἰ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τυραννοῦ προλαβόντα τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἀνέλκειν, συνθηκὰς τινες χρυβδὴν ἐποιοῦντο, καλῶς ἀν ἐποιοῦν· οὕτω δὲ καὶ Χριστιανοὶ, τυραννοῦντος τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς καλδυνεμένου διαβόλου καὶ τοῦ ψευδούς, συνθηκὰς ποιοῦνται, παρὰ τὰ νενομισμένα τῷ διαβόλῳ.* But the suspicion vanishes when we consider (1) that he here speaks according to the notions of the Greeks, and refers every thing to past times: "If those were formerly esteemed as noble men who had put a tyrant out of the way because he subjugated the city,

ble, I say, to reconcile such an idea with the moral purity and Christian piety, for which, taken as a body, they were noted? Could Clement ever have learnt from a Peter and a Paul thus to advance the cause of Christ? Could he have so far lost all sense of shame, as to establish a regular counting-house for the purpose of manufacturing supposititious works in the gross and imputing them to celebrated men in order to advance the objects of his confederacy? Would he presume to draw such venerable men as a Timothy, an Ignatius, a Polycarp, yes, and even a James the apostle, into his secret plans and make them dependent upon him as the chief of the confederacy? And how weak, blinded, and forgetful of their own dignity would they have shown themselves by entering into his plan and consenting to become his instruments? Again, on the other hand, is it possible to conceive that the apostle John (S. 81) could have projected the plan of a Secret Society of Theologians, as it is called, for preserving certain mysterious doctrines of Christianity, *γνωσεις*, from the eyes of the profane world and imparting them only to the initiated,* and Clement have opposed to this secret, Gnostic confederacy, his more active Agape-confederacy, though the materials of the latter were drawn in a great measure from the mysteries of the former?†

why should not Christians also be so considered?" and (2) the application which he makes of it to a purely spiritual conflict against a spiritual enemy. Who can thence draw any inference to prove that he justified assassination?

* This is drawn from Dionys. Areop. Hierarch. Eccles. c. 1. §1. [ed. Corder. Tom. I. 230.] The discourse in this place, however, does not speak of a mystical order, but of the caution recommended agreeably to the esoteric mode of teaching, not to impart the holy to the unholy. Dionysius says nothing about John's having established a mystical order.

† Among other things it is said that the Apocalypse kept concealed by John's society, was purloined by Papias and brought to Clement, S. 213—217; and that this transaction was allegorically represented in the well known account of the youth whom John intrusted to the protection of a bishop, and who, having been drawn into a band of robbers, [the confederacy of the Agapists] was followed after by John and again rescued. Clemens Alex. Quis Dives Salvetur, c. 42 seqq. p. 957—960, ed. Pott., and Euseb. H. E. III. 23, comp.

and that, by means of some connexions which Clement had at the imperial court, he made preparations for the banishment of John to the Isle of Patmos, (S. 85) the accomplishment of which caused many of the pupils of the latter to pass over to the Agape? What do those mean who thus degrade the first propagators of Christianity?

Serious and severe, but just and true, are the remarks made by a critic,* respecting this work; and such is their value, that they well deserve to be read in this place. "He, who gives a historical representation for the purpose of degrading human nature, deals in falsehood and is a traitor of his race. The same may be said of him, if his work extends only to individuals. That historical representation of a nation which does not aim at exhibiting the phenomena of the human mind in its exaltation, beauty, and dignity, is, on that very account, to be rejected. Human nature always remains human nature, and deserving of respect even in the midst of its degradation. Now he, who, in addition to this, suffers himself to be blinded by unworthy notions with regard to that which shines in its natural dignity, and disfigures the moral and spiritual beauty of a phenomenon without necessity, grievously transgresses and exhibits himself in all his own unworthiness.

We come now to the case before us. The author had to investigate the history of the first formation and extension of the Christian church. He, who undertakes a historical investigation of the Christian church, must be guided by a belief in the truth and high power of the Christian spirit, and never relinquish this belief. In the midst of the corruptions and aberrations of the church,

Lampe, respecting this account, *Commentar. in Evangel. Ioann. Tom. I. Prolegg.*, p. 71—78, where there is a representation, and a good critical examination of the various views which have been taken of the subject.

* Hall. *Allg. Litt. Zeit.*, I. S. 19, 20, 1820.* There is much suggested in opposition to Kestner, in Tzschirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, as for instance, S. 214, 215, comp. 351, respecting the age of Athenagoras' apology; S. 217, 218, respecting the Epistle to Diognetus; S. 300 f.

he must be able to recognise and trace the constant workings of this spirit, nor should he ever look upon them as impure and corrupt until he has gone through with the most conscientious examination; and then, in connexion with them, he should always be able to discover the traces of the pure and incorruptible spirit. If he fails to do this, he denies the Christian faith; if he creates the wicked where it does not exist, he is a wilful offender. From the very nature of the case, it is evident, that the Christian spirit was much purer and more powerful in the early ages than it was, afterwards. In order to find its corruptions there, we must of course be guided by clear and credible testimonies. The author, however, finds them without the aid of any such testimonies, and he basely and capriciously creates them for himself whenever he wants them. We shrink back with horror from a survey of all the impurities and corruptions which he ascribes to the pupils of the apostles; in the first place, that distrust in the almighty power of the Christian spirit, as well as in Christian truth and love, from which Clement must have derived his idea of this confederacy, and then the means of cunning, force, and deceit, which he is said to have employed to carry this idea into effect;—a series of profane and mysterious contrivances worse than the Jewish and heathen priests ever employed, who could not thus profane the truth itself, because they knew it not; the forging of numerous fraudulent works; the outwitting and persecuting of Christian brethren, (the members of John's Society of Theologians,) a multitude of secret deeds of violence, and the murdering and poisoning of emperors;—and all this, without a single trace of evidence worthy of historical credence. The whole hypothesis of the author originated in a want of belief in the exaltation of human nature and in Christianity, its most sacred concern; and a vain wish to make some new discovery."

respecting Hadrian; S. 304—313, respecting Marcus Aurelius, all of which agrees with what Eichstädt has said upon the same subject; and S. 315—322, respecting Lucian not a friend of Christians.

D. p. 187.

Whether the idea of founding a kingdom of God upon earth is to be met with before the time of Christ.

It is an essential link in the chain of Reinhard's investigation, to prove, that no human mind before Jesus ever conceived the exalted idea of uniting the whole human family together in a kingdom of God, and founding a universal church for the salvation of all. The author has exhibited the historical deduction of this assertion in a very clear and convincing manner, and with regard to it entered into such detail as to include persons, who may seem as it were to have stood too low to be deemed worthy of a comparison with Jesus; and many have expressed their cordial approbation of the conclusion to which he has arrived.* There are not wanting those, however, who dissent from him, in this respect, maintain the opposite, and believe the idea of a kingdom of God to have had an existence long before the time of Christ.

I. (a) Fessler† appeals, in the first place, to the language

* Zacharia, Die Einheit des Staats und der K., 1797, S. 9. Anm. "Whence comes it, that the heathen philosophers, who, since the time of Anaxagoras, [? vid. Ritter, Geschichte der Ionischen Philosophie,] have certainly brought forward some very worthy notions respecting the Godhead, have never once conceived the idea of a church?" Tzschirner, Der Fall des Heidenthums, S. 37. "The religious creed of the Greeks embodied no such idea as that of a kingdom of God." - [It is an idea of which men must remain destitute until they receive it from God, from whom it derives its existence,—until he himself founds a kingdom and calls mankind into it. Comp. Kant, Religion innerhalb der Grenzen d. bl. V., S. 141. 2te. A. "To found a moral people of God, is a work, therefore, the execution of which cannot be expected from men, but only from God himself."]

† Ansichten von Relig. u. Kirchentum, I. 180. "The sublime and rational idea of Jesus had had an existence as a contemplation in the minds of many select persons, long before it was expressed under the symbol of a kingdom of God founded among men, and, through the influence of religion, filled with eternal peace; and these persons, penetrated with the sacred feeling of religion, had

of Hermes Trismegistus in *Pœmander*, without asking a single word respecting the age to which this work belongs. The critic cannot date it farther back than the fourth century of the Christian era, as it commingles Christian notions and in part New Testament expressions, with cabalistic and New Platonic ones.* Besides, one would deceive himself should he expect to find the subject of which I am now speaking, mentioned in these Hermetical oracles. The passages collected together by Fessler contain nothing but such general religious views respecting the nature of God, the relation of God to the world, and raising one's self to him in language, as we might expect from the above named schools. The same writer farther appeals to the Pythagoreans and Esenes,† who founded religious communities in Egypt and Palestine. As regards those of the Pythagoreans, who, when this society was destroyed, fled into Egypt, there is not the least particle of proof that they ever thought of a universal kingdom of God in any of their connexions with this order. Such an idea seems to have been as foreign from their mind as from that of their master. Nor do those writers by whom the names of several of these Pythagoreans have been preserved, say a single syllable respecting such a plan.‡ With respect to the

collected around them associates, and such as were susceptible of their own illumination, and, for the purpose of representing the infinite in the finite, united them together in churches." The passages are, as is evident from a comparison, taken, without any very accurate reference, from the translation of *Pœmander* by Tiedemann, Berl., 1781; especially from S. 79. 87. 96. 45. 73, 74.

* Vid. Exercit. Antibar. according to Casaubon, I. c. 10. p. 66—80, ed. Gen., 1663; Fabric., *Biblioth. Graec.*, I. 46 seqq.; Cudworth, *Syst. Int. ed. Mosh.*, Ien., p. 373—389; [True Intellect. *Syst. of the Universe*, Vol. I. pp. 319—334, 2d ed. Lond. 1743. Tr.]; Brucker, *Hist. Crit. Philos.*, I. 260 seqq; especially Meiner, *Versuch über die Religionsgesch. d. alt. Völker*, bes. d. Aegypt. S. 202—249, which is not weakened by Kreuzer, *Symbolik*, I. 363 ff. 381 f.

† In the *Ansichten*, S. 184 ff.

‡ Diogen. Laert. l. VIII. Sgm. 46. p. 524, ed. Wetst.; Iamblich., *De vita Pythag.*, c. 36. p. 215, ed. Kust.

Essenes, Fessler himself acknowledges, (S. 187 f.) "that they were occupied with the dignity and sanctity of their internal life, rather than possessed of the dignity and sanctity of religion itself, and hence, fell into absolute exclusiveness." It is in vain to seek for any thing among them, therefore, which can be opposed to the proof of Reinhard.

(b) But did not Plato, in the conception which he formed of his state, also include the conception of a kingdom of God? One might, perhaps, be inclined to admit this from the fact, that the state, a plan of which he projected, was an ideal one, the original of which was to be found only in the celestial world;* and that his state was not merely a juridical, but an ethical commonwealth, in which, the moral culture of the citizens† was to be promoted by a good education‡ and by religion, which he considered as essential parts of his state, and blended with all its regulations.§ Some intimations at least made with a reference to this subject, have been given in our time.|| These intimations, however, are not of such a

* De Republ., I. V. p. 51. I. IX. 281, (Bip. Tom. 7;) comp. Clem. Alex., Strom., I. 4, extr. p. 543. Sylb., *Ἰσμεν δε και την Πλατωνος πολιν, παραδειγμα εν ουρανῳ κειμενην.*

† De Republ., I. IV. 378, (Tom. 6.) VI. 114. VII. 133. VIII. 186, (Tom. 7.) De Legg., I. 16 seqq. IV. 164. V. 203. 217, (Tom. 8.) IX. 4. 21, (Tom. 9.)

‡ De Republ., II. 246 seq. IV. 334; De Legg., I. 18 seq. 41 seq. VI. 279 seq., especially I. VII. from the beginning p. 320, (Tom. 8.)

§ De Republ., II. 253; De Legg., I. I. from the beginning, IV. 185. VI. 185, 266. VII. 352, and especially X. from the beginning p. 66 seqq. (Tom. 9.)

|| Köppen, Politik nach Platonischen Grundsätzen mit Anwendung auf unsre Zeit, S. 79, L. 1818. "Plato and Christ originally had precisely the same thing in view, namely, promoting the welfare of the human race, by putting them in possession of a very high degree of virtue and an internal moral harmony of the free mind, which should prove a source of many commendable deeds, and of lasting good to mankind."—S. 81. "We find essentially the same (namely the moral and religious perfection of the feelings by means of the church,) to be the object of a state constructed upon Plato's principles."—S. 97. "The object of Plato's state and of

character as to imply, that the idea which Plato had of his state, was identically that of the Christian church. Indeed, the outlines of Plato's conception will by no means justify such intimations.—Admit the state of which Plato conceived to be a mental creation, as he conceived of certain archetypes for all the objects of philosophical investigation, yet it was a mental creation only of a political, earthly state. The heavenly world in which the prototype of this state was to be found, was not such a heaven as the Christian has in view,—the glorious kingdom of spirits, but the intellectual world of ideas, (*De Republ.* VII. 157 seqq. ;) and hence, the first thing to be done, is to find out the form of that conception. Now inspection is sufficient of itself to teach us that the republic of Plato was as far removed from bearing any resemblance to the church of Christ as the earth is from heaven. The church is a union which calls men to separate themselves from the world and become members of a higher and divine community. Plato's state, on the other hand, began altogether with the earth, was confined to the narrow sphere of a city, and constructed with a reference to sub-lunary wants, (*De Republ.* II. 230 seqq.) “Plato's object was to form a Grecian state, the inhabitants of which should be lovers of Greece, and for this purpose he projected one which should serve as a pattern for his nation and countrymen,” (*Köppen*, l. c. S. 73 ;) but it was very far removed from being a universal kingdom of God, comprehending the whole human family. On the contrary, he often presupposes this state to be engaged in war with its neighbours, and one important object to be kept in view in all its acts, was to form bold defenders of the country ; and hence, even women were to be pre-

Christianity and its exalted faith is the free choice of the highest good together with the harmonious dispositions and charitable emotions before which, selfishness and physical enjoyment shrink away in silence.”—S. 347. “The republic of Plato, though very far from ever having been realized, kept the nature of all right, and moral harmony, in view, and, in its civil regulations, sought to furnish means for producing genuine and lasting moral effects.”

pared by education to share in the labors of war, (De Republ. V. p. 8 ; De Legg. VII. 373.) Of course this state could not be left destitute of moral education ; for as it contained no church or ecclesiastical institutions which aimed at the moral and religious education of its members, so it was obliged to furnish a remedy for these defects ; to accomplish which object, political education and moral were blended together, as ethics and politics were always united among the ancients.* The result of this, however, was, that the idea of a purely moral and religious community of men, exalted above all civil relations, was kept entirely out of view.

The first requisite, however, in forming a kingdom of God, is to lay a pure religion at the basis, and form a creed adapted for community at large, and of universal authority, and at the same time of such a character as to unite all hearts together and bind them to God himself. If Plato, therefore, ever had any idea of a genuine kingdom of God, we ought to discover hints in his works respecting the introduction of a pure religious creed instead of the Polytheism then prevalent and so prejudicial to the union of mankind. So far, however, are we from finding any thing in them respecting the abolition of a religion which had once been sanctioned by the state, that on the other hand, he urges the legislator with all earnestness to preserve it unchanged. "No man," says he, "who has sense, whether he undertakes to erect a new state from the very foundation, or merely to restore an old one which has been broken down, will attempt to change those things relative to the gods and to sacred ceremonies which ought to be stable,—from whatever gods or demons they may have received their ap-

* Köppen, l. c. S. 1—35. 58, shows this very circumstantially and goes so far as to recommend this combination at the present time. He even asserts, S. 79, that, for this very reason, modern states when compared with the ancient, would scarcely have retained any spiritual life, had not Christianity by its mighty operation excited higher reflection, and proved the means of advancing an internal virtue at which the state had not aimed.

pellation. Nor should the legislator touch in any respect that which is founded upon the authority of the oracle, or upon sacred old sayings.”* In perfect accordance with this serious admonition is his prescription that every archon should offer sacrifice for himself and the state every day of the 365, (De Legg. VIII. 396,) as well as for those who have been guilty of bitter resentment against the gods, and contemning the old religion which they drew in from their mother’s breast, (lib. X. 71. Tom. 9.) It cannot appear strange that as long as this Polytheistical religion existed, their remained no sacred, internal bond for uniting together the hearts of the members of this community; and hence, that, in order to produce such a close connexion between them, Plato fell into the error of recommending to his state, a community of wives;† thinking in this way to induce all to consider each other as brothers and sisters. Such they would have been indeed, but in what sense? Certainly none but a physical one.‡ Such a regulation

* De Legg. l. V. 226, 227, (Bip. Tom. 8.) Οὐτ’ ἂν καινήν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τις ποιῇ, οὐτ’ ἂν παλαιὰν διεφθαρμένην ἐπισκευάζεται, περὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἱερῶν ἅττα τε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἑκάστοις ἰδρυσθαι δεῖ, καὶ ὧν τινῶν ἐπονομαζεσθαι θεῶν ἢ δαιμονῶν, οὐδεὶς ἐπιχειρήσει κινεῖν οὐδὲν ἔχων. Ὅσα ἐκ Δελφῶν—ἢ τινες ἐπεισαν παλαιοὶ λόγοι,—τούτων νομοθετῇ το σμικροτάτον ἀπαντῶν οὐδὲν κίνητεον. So also Plutarch, De Is. et Osiris, Opp. VII. 419, afterwards called a wish to make changes in an established religion,—a wish, ἀκίνητα κινεῖν, and hence, p. 420, bitterly censured Evemerus; Max. Tyr. Diss. 8. I. 146, Reisk. τὰ κείμενα εἶμεν, τὰς φημὶς τῶν θεῶν ἀποδεχομένοι, καὶ φυλάττοντες αὐτῶν τὰ σύμβολα, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα.

† Not merely in the De Republ. l. V. 19 seqq., but also in the De Legg. l. V. 229, which books relate more to practical legislation, and were written in the latter part of his life.

‡ De Republ. V. 32. 24 seq., where he expresses a belief that a better race of men can be produced by physical means. Comp. III. 319, where he evinces an anxiety to have the citizens persuaded by means of fiction to consider themselves as autochthons, as sprung entirely from the earth, in order that, as γηγενεῖς, they might think and feel towards each other, like brethren. The idea which he had of his community as well as much of a general character, was probably borrowed from the Spartan constitution, in which state, according to Plutarch, Lycurg., Opp. I. 194 s., something of this kind was actually to be found, and the women were celebrated for being γαι-

would not have accomplished the object for which it was intended, but necessarily have proved detrimental to the interests of the nobler moral community. As unworthy as this means would have been of an ethical community,* others are recommended which would have been equally immoral and improper; as, for instance, the use of deceptive arts for the purpose of controlling the people, such dissimulation being extolled as noble, *De Republ.* l. III. 318. V. 23; the dancing of the two sexes together naked, *De legg.* VI. 291; and also the drinking of wine, *De legg.* I. 54 s. II. 58. 86. By looking at the nature of the means to be employed for purposes of education and improvement, we may sufficiently ascertain the character of the spirit of the state which was to apply them.

Moreover, apart from the preceding considerations, what Plato uttered relative to this subject, was merely by way of sporting with ideas and without any intimation of a serious effort to realize the state which he described. This he frankly admits,† and once, indeed, he goes so far as to make a humiliating confession in this respect. "Those," says he, "who are acquainted with the insanity of man, and aware of the impossibility of their accomplishing any thing in opposition to a rough nation, (which he compares to a wild beast, *De Republ.* VI. 88,) choose the tranquillity of retirement and attend exclusively to their own concerns. Sensible that death would overtake them before they could do any thing for their friends or the state should they make the attempt, and consequently, that their labors would be useless both to themselves and others, they seek shelter within their own

ρομηνίδες, and *ανδρομανεις*, *Comparat. Lycurg. et Numae*, p. 306—308. [*Plutarch's Lives*, &c. Vol I. p. 128. Tr.]

* It was customary in Rome for women to read Plato's Republic; Why? says *Epicteti Fragm.* 53, in the *Schweighäus. Monumenta*, Tom. III. 84.

† *De Legg.* V. 222; *λογω γ' εστι τα νυν, αλλ' ουκ εργω πραττομενα*. Perhaps it is with reference to this passage, that *Gregor. Naz.* says, *Orat. adv. Iulian.*, 8. p. 66; *πως δε ου θαναταειν αζιον τουτους, οι και λογω πλαττουσιν πολεις, τας εργω συστηναι μη δυναμενας*;

walls from the storm, as it were, which rages without, satisfied with the hope of preserving themselves pure from injustice and unhallowed acts, and closing their lives in cheerfulness and well-wishing, without having been able to do any thing of very great importance unless by chance they may have been born in a state favorable to them in this respect.”* It is evident that Plato was very faint-hearted, and could hardly express how incapable he felt of undertaking any thing serious even for his own corrupt citizens in Athens, and making any proposals to them for effecting a radical cure. The opinion of Diogenes respecting him and one which he used to repeat whenever he heard Plato praised, though severe, was certainly well founded: “What has this man done worthy of honor, who, notwithstanding the length of time he has attended to philosophy, has never yet caused any one to grieve; [that is, according to the connexion] has never yet brought any one to the salutary pangs of repentance?”† with which, the opinion of Origen agrees:‡ “What Plato said respecting the chief good, however true, aided neither his hearers nor himself, notwithstanding he had philosophized so much about it, in attaining to genuine piety; while the simple language of the sacred Scriptures fills those who read them correctly, with holy ardor of soul.” Eusebius also evinces a thorough acquaintance with the true cause of Plato’s inefficacy as well as that of all the ancient philosophers, when he says:§ “Plato

* De Rep., l. VI. 95, 96.

† Plutarch De Virtute Morali extr. Opp. VII. 776. *Τί δ' ἐκείνος ἔχει σεμνόν, ὅς τοσούτον χρόνον φιλοσοφῶν, οὐδὲνα λελυπηκέν;*

‡ Contra Cels., l. VI. c. 5. Opp. I. 633. *Ὅρα ὅτι ἡ μὲν ἐν Πλάτῳ περὶ τούτου ἀληθεῖα οὐδὲν ὡς πρὸς εὐσεβεῖαν ἀνῆκε τοὺς ἐντυχάνοντας, ἀλλ' οὐδ' αὐτὸν τα τοιαῦτα περὶ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ φιλοσοφῶντα· ἡ δὲ τῶν θείων γραμμάτων εὐτελὲς λέξις ἐνθουσίαν πεποιήκα τοὺς γνησίως ἐντυχάνοντας αὐτή.*

§ Demonstrat. Evangel. l. III. c. 6. p. 129, 130, Col. *Ἐκείνῳ μὲν καὶ ἐργὸν εὖρεῖν ἔδοκει τὰ πρᾶγμα καὶ ἡν ὡς ἀληθῶς μεγίστον· ἀδυνατὸν δὲ ἡν αὐτῷ λέγειν εἰς πάντα, ὅτι μὴ παρῇν αὐτῷ τοσαύτη τις εὐσεβείας δύναμις, ὅση τοῖς Ἰησοῦ μαθηταῖς, οἷς διὰ τῆς τοῦ διδασκαλοῦ συν-*

seems to have considered it a difficult problem to obtain a knowledge of the true God and Father and to make him known, (Timaeus, Opp. IX. 303;) and indeed it was also the principal one. It was impossible, however, for him to announce what he knew of the Deity to all, because of his being destitute of that strength of piety which the disciples of Jesus possessed, under the influence of which in connexion with the assistance of their master, it was not only easy for them to discover God, and obtain a knowledge of the Father and Creator of the universe, but also, after they had discovered him, to extend this knowledge to all classes of people and proclaim it to mankind at large." But should any one after all, adhere to the belief, that Plato's conception of his state, resembled Christ's, of the kingdom of God, yet it remains unquestionable that not the least trace is to be found in Plato's works of an intention to carry this conception into actual execution.

(c) We have now to inquire, whether any intimations of the idea at present before us are to be discovered among the stoics, especially the later ones of Epictetus' school.* These sects looked upon the world as a *whole*, and mankind as *its inhabitants*. They imagined all men to be united together in *one exalted state*, subjected to *one order*, and bound by *one law of universal validity*; and hence, they deduced the obligation of all men to consider each other as brethren and to exert their efforts and offer themselves in sacrifice to promote the general good.† These conceptions may at first glance seem to

εργίας, τον πατέρα και δημιουργον των όλων εύρειν τε και γνωραι θάδιον γεγορε, και εύρουσιν εις παν γερος ανθρωπων εξεγεγειν, ανακαλυψαι τε και πληρωσαι, και κηρυξαι την γνωσιν πᾶσιν.

* Ammon in the Summa Theolog. Christ., ed. 3, p. 8, after having shown the spiritual purport of the Scriptural representation of the kingdom of God, observes that "Eodem tendunt, quae Stoici de mundo, communi hominum et numinis civitate (Cicero Fin. III. 19,) et de *sacro universi vinculo* (σύνδεσις ἁγία, Antonin. De se ipso, lib. VII. § 9,) seu veritate a numine proveniente philosophati sunt."

† The principal passages in addition to those quoted in the above

resemble that of Christ. Upon a closer and more thorough examination of them, however, it will be impossible not to perceive an essential difference.

It is true, the Stoics gave an exalted description of the order of the world and the harmony of the universe. Of this, the hymn of Cleanthes is a splendid memorial.* The order, however, which they described was only that existing in the kingdom of nature, to which man himself belonged as a part, and not in any respect that of a kingdom of freedom or a kingdom of grace, in which hearts are united together in the harmony of faith and love, and of a free community entered into by mankind for this purpose. Their idea of the order of the world is rendered very clear and intelligible from the explanation given of it by Zeno the founder of the Stoical school, in Diogenes Laertius, (lib. VII. Segm. 138 s. p. 451, Wetst.) in which, after having mentioned the different meanings which the Stoics attached to the word *κόσμος*, he says: "The world

note, are the following: Arriani Dissertatt. Epictet. l. I. c. 3. et 9. l. II. c. 5. § 26. c. 10. § 3 s. c. 14. § 11 s. 25 s. l. III. c. 24. § 10. 15 et 66, in the first vol. of Sweighäus. Epictet. Philos. Monumenta; Dio Chrysostomus in the Oratt. ed. Reiskiae, Tom. I. p. 56 s. 388. 391 s. 413 s. 556 ss. Tom. II. 88 s. 91 s. 176. and Oratio 75, De Lege p. 406—9. In the books of Marcus Antoninus, *Περὶ ἑαυτοῦ*, there are very many passages; as for instance, II. 1 et 16 extr. III. 11. IV. 4. 14 et 23. V. 8 et 31. VI. 14. 42—44. VII. 13 et 55. VIII. 7. 27 et 36. IX. 1. 9 et 23. XII. 31; Maximus Tyr. Diss. 12. 17. 19, Reisk. I. 222. 316 s. 337 s. 363 s. 370 ss.; of Cicero, the following passages belong here; De Offic. III. 5, De legg. I. 7. De Republ. I. 13. III. 22, from which there is an excellent fragment preserved by Lactant. Instit. Div. VI. 8; Seneca, De Otio Sap. c. 31. De Benef. IV. 7 et 8. Epist. 95. Natur. Quaest. II. 45. [Much can also be found to the purpose in Cudworth, True Intellectual System of the Universe, Vol. I. p. 419 seqq. 2d. ed. Lond. 1743, and Leland, Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation, Vol. I. Chap. XIII. p. 231 seqq. Vol. II. Chap. IX. 122 seqq. and elsewhere, Dubl. 1766. The most full and satisfactory account, however, of the principles of the Stoics, is to be found in Tennemann, Geschichte der Philosophie, 4er Band., S. 38 ff. 5er B. S. 42 ff. S. 140 ff. and elsewhere. Tr.]

* [This hymn together with a Latin translation is to be found in Cudworth, True Intellectual System of the Universe, p. 432 seqq., 2d. ed., Lond., 1743. Tr.]

is that which gives to the substance of the universe its peculiar quality or form, or the system of the heaven and earth and the natures they contain ; or the system composed of gods and men and those things created for their sake. The heaven is the ultimate circle within which the whole Deity resides. The world is governed by a spirit, and by providence, and the spirit pervades all parts of the world, as the soul does all parts of us."*. Here, clearly expressed, we have the notions of the Stoics respecting the existing order of the physical world, as handed down in the works of the rest of this sect. According to their views, this order was already in existence and with immovable necessity pursued its course, while all things were obliged to yield to it, (ὅλως γὰρ ἐστὶν ἁρμονία μία, Marc. Ant., V. 8;) and as we all have one common spirit, one reason, one law, so likewise we are all citizens and partakers of one state ; and consequently, the world is as it were a state.† How different is this from the Christian kingdom of God, which does not even exist in nature in our world, and to which man indeed, does not naturally belong ; but which had first to come into the world, and into which, man is first introduced by the new birth ! However splendid the natural order of the world may be, it does not furnish man with that saving remedy, which, in his present universal moral corruption, he needs.‡ To

* Ἐστὶ κόσμος ὁ ἰδίως ποιὸς [ὁ ἰδιοποιός] τῆς τῶν ὅλων οὐσίας; ἡ σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων· ἡ σύστημα ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῶν ἐνεκα τούτων γεγόνотων οὐρανοῦ δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ εὐχάτη περιφέρεια, ἐν ᾗ πάντες ἰδρύνται τὸ θεῖον· τὸν δὲ κόσμον οἰκίσθαι κατὰ νοῦν καὶ προορίαν, εἰς ἅπαν αὐτοῦ μέρος διηκόντος τοῦ νοῦ, καθάπερ ἐφ' ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς. [Comp. Leland, Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation, &c. Vol. I. 242, Dublin, 1766. Tr.]

† Marc. Anton. IV. 4. Εἰ το νοερόν ἡμῖν κοῖνον, καὶ ὁ λόγος, καθ' ὃν λογικοὶ ἐσμεν, κοῖνος· εἰ τοῦτο, καὶ ὁ προστακτικὸς τῶν παιγνίων ἡ μὴ, λόγος κοῖνος· εἰ τοῦτο, καὶ ὁ νόμος κοῖνος· εἰ τοῦτο, πολῖται ἐσμεν· εἰ τοῦτο, πολιτευματος τίνος μετεχόμεν· εἰ τοῦτο, ὁ κόσμος ὥσπερ πολὺς ἐστὶ·

‡ Excellent is the remark of Tatianus, Orat. ad Graec. p. 458, ed. Col. Κοσμον μὲν ἡ κατασκευή, καλὴ· το δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πολίτευμα, φαῦλον. καὶ, καθάπερ ἐν πανηγυρί, θεατροκοπούμενους ἐνεστὶν ἰδεῖν, τοὺς οὐκ εἰδοτάς τὸν θεόν·

this it should be added, that the notions of the Stoics respecting the order of the world incline very strongly towards Pantheism and Fatalism; and this destroys every thing like the pure idea of a moral kingdom of God, or at least, renders it very obscure. If man resembles a player's ball which is now thrown up, and then knocked down, (Marc. Anton. VIII. 20. IX. 17;) if every thing that happens to him has been destined from eternity, and the concatenation of causes has interwoven our personal self and these external circumstances into one;* if man is to bear every thing that befalls him with an inflexible, apathetic resignation, merely because he is an unchangeable part of the whole, and what does not injure the whole cannot injure the individual parts, (M. A. V. 22. X. 6 and 34. XI. 8 and 18;) if man is altogether uncertain of his future destination and doubtful whether the soul being the vapor of blood, (V. 33) is entirely to perish, or to pass through a transmutation, (*σβεσις μετασταςις*, V. 33,) or to be dissolved into the universe, (IV. 14 and 21. VII. 10. X. 7;) if, therefore, suicide is expressly to be permitted, (III. 1. V. 29. X. 8;) and, finally, if destruction threatens the whole world, and Jupiter, after this great conflagration, is to remain alone, (Arrian, Diss. Epict. III. 13. § 4, comp. Schweighäuser's Anm., Tom. II. P. 2. p. 671;)—if such are the principles of the Stoics, then must our opinion of the views they entertained respecting the world, rank very low. Now admit that the Stoical school was acquainted with the moral law as a holy law, of universal validity and written upon every heart, (as excellently described by Cicero, De Republ. III. 22;) there is still a very great chasm between this knowledge and the fixed plan of procuring for this law universal influence, and, for this purpose, calling mankind into a free community, and consequently establishing a genuine king-

*. ὅ,τι ἂν σοι συμβαίῃ, τούτῳ σοι ἐξ αἰῶνος προκατεσχευάετο· καὶ ἡ ἐπιλογὴ τῶν αἰτίων συνεζώσθῃ τὴν τε σὴν ὑπόστασιν ἐξ αἰδίου, καὶ τὴν τούτου συμβασιν· Marc. Ant., X. 5. Buddeus in the treatise at the commencement of the Woll. Ausg. p. 45, understands the *συνδεαίς* *ἕρμα*, VII. 9, of the band of fate.

dom of God. How much so ever these Stoics were acquainted with the name of *citizens of the world** which they borrowed from Socrates and Diogenes, we find among them nothing like a determination, to procure for the sacred law of God a public and external influence and spread the truth over the earth. Antoninus despaired of ever obtaining better hopes for this world. "Fidelity and modesty, justice and truth," complains he, "have fled from earth to heaven. What then is there left to detain thee here?" (V. 33.) "Hope not for a Platonic state, but satisfy thyself with making the least progress in the business of thy calling," (IX. 29.) Seneca, according to Augustin, (De Civit. Dei, VI. c. 10, in the Fragments of Seneca, Nr. 34, in the first part of Tom. I., Elsevir's ed. 1672,) spoke with great frankness in his works against the prevailing, popular religion, but did nothing to substitute a better religion in its stead; on the other hand, he satisfied himself with that in existence. "Haec omnia sapiens servabit, tanquam legibus iussa, non tanquam Diis grata." The vivifying spirit of the holy and active love which can come only from that vivifying love made manifest by God, breathed not in the *Stoa*, and this is the reason why we cannot here find any thing that fully compares with the idea of the kingdom of God.†

II. From the soil of heathen philosophy, we will now pass

* Respecting Socrates, vid. Plutarch, De Exilio, VIII. 371, and Cicero, Tusc. V. 37; respecting Diogenes, Plutarch, De Animi Tranq., VII. 865. This appellation is mentioned by way of ridicule in Lucian, Vitar. Auct. Opp. Bip. III. 89.

† What Kestner has said in the very excellent Appendix to his Agape, S. 42, is very true: "The Stoics strove after a resemblance to God, but the moral pattern which they had before them was not that of a living God, a perfect and holy Being, but the cold order of the willess universe. They pretended to encircle the world and its inhabitants in the arms of love, but their love was a mere speculative concern; the principle of moral inclination was to them the gravitating power of nature which holds similar particles together, (M. Ant. *Εἰς ἑαυτ.* X. 9.) The love of the Stoics was a maxim, not a feeling; an acquired principle, not the natural tone of a religious feeling."

over to the region of divine revelation in the Old Testament. And here an examination of the question, Whether any intimations or prophecies of a definite character are to be found respecting a future kingdom of God which should be the means of extending true religion among all nations of the earth, will bring us to a different result from those to which we have hitherto been led; for it is manifest at first glance, that the prophets of the Old Testament had clear views of the future, in this respect. Reinhard acknowledges this,* though he has but slightly touched upon this important subject, (pp. 263, 264.) It may be well, therefore, to investigate this point so far as our present object requires. It is presented to us in the Old Testament in two ways; *first*, in general promises of a time in which the darkness of the earth should give away, idolatry be destroyed, sin, extirpated, and the knowledge and the worship of the true God be spread abroad over the world, (*vaticinia Messiana sensu latiori*;) and *second*, in particular predictions and representations of the great instrument by which the salvation of mankind was to be effected, (*vaticinia Messiana sensu strictiori*.) Our object is to show how a reference to the salvation of the whole human family, runs throughout the Old Testament; and this requires us to attend only to the first. Traces of such a reference are to be found in the most ancient parts of the Old Testament history. The promises that were made to Abra-

* It is worthy of remark that the first sermon printed by Reinhard, which few doubtless have seen, treats of this subject, and is headed: "Respecting the influence which was exerted by those prophecies of the Old Testament that treat of Christ and his kingdom, in the cultivation of the heart as regards piety; a sermon delivered by F. V. R. in the parish-church at Wittemberg on Mary's Visitation, in 1776," [from the lesson, Isa. 11: 1—5, upon which he comments in his Christmas Programma of 1783, Opusc. Acad. II. 1—29;] pp. 52, strictly speaking, only 36. In this sermon, with all its defects in other respects, we recognise Reinhard's spirit and language. The first and longest part takes into consideration the prophecies themselves together with their matter and proper interpretation. The second describes (1) the influence which these prophecies are adapted to exert upon our present knowledge, belief, and hope.

ham, that in him (Gen. 12: 3. 18: 18,) or in his seed, (Gen. 22: 18,)* all the nations of the earth should be blessed,—promises, which the reasons added, (18: 19. 22: 18,) will not allow us to interpret of a temporal, but must be understood of a spiritual blessing,—evidently refer to a universal plan, which God, by means of Abraham's posterity, intended to carry into execution for a blessing to mankind. With these before us, therefore, we should expect nothing else than to find allusions in the Psalms of David to the age in which the heathen should be converted to the true God, (Ps. 22: 28, 29. 72: 8, 11, 17—19,) and to the extension of the Messiah's kingdom over the world, (Ps. 2: 8.) Now definite predictions of this kind are crowded together in great numbers in the prophets. The most essential traits of their representations in painting the splendid future, are these: Jehovah is to be acknowledged and worshipped as the only true God; his name is to be feared from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun, (Isa. 2: 2—4. 12: 4, 5. 59: 19. Mal. 1: 11.) Idolatry is to be abolished and exhibited in its nothingness, (Isa. 2: 18. 40: 21. 41: 24. 42: 8, 17. 44: 11. Zeph. 2: 11.) The heathen are to be animated with a desire after salvation, (Hag. 2: 7,) are to turn to the true God and with his ancient worshippers to become a nation of God, (Isa. 42: 6. 45: 22—24. 49: 6. 55: 5. 60: 3—5. 65: 1.) The Lord is to destroy the vail spread over all nations, (Isa. 25: 7,) sacrifice together with the ark of the covenant is to be taken away, (Jer. 3: 16,) and a new covenant, not a covenant of bondage, but of a free and willing mind, is to take the place of the old one, (Jer. 31: 31—34;) for the spirit of God is to be poured out upon all flesh, (Ezek. 36: 25—28. Joel 2: 28. Zech. 12: 10.) They are to worship God in truth and righteousness, (Zech. 8:

* The correct meaning of these passages has been defended against Jurieu, Clericus, and some later writers, by Jahn, *Bibl. Archæol.*, II. 2. S. 214—217; Ej. *Appendix Hermeneut.*, II. 197—206; Ammon, *Bibl. Theol.* II. 52 ff; and Hengstenberg, *Christologie des A. T.*, X. 54 ff.

8,) under the standard of a good shepherd and king whom God will give them, (Isa. 11: 1—10. 62: 10, 11. Jer. 23: 5, 6. 33: 15, 16. Ezek. 34: 23,) whose kingdom is to be divine and eternal, and to comprehend all nations, (Dan. 2: 44. 7: 13, 14, 18,) and whose standard is to be planted like a cedar tree on a high hill, under which, even in the shadow of its branches every fowl of every wing is to dwell, (Ezek. 17: 23.) Who, in examining all these passages and declarations of Scripture which might easily be multiplied, can fail to discover a decided belief expressed, that God had determined to enlighten and animate all the nations of the earth with the light of his word; that he had already selected the instrument for accomplishing it; and hence, that a saving institution was to be founded for the good of all, especially as prophets were then from time to time sent forth to effect the conversion of the heathen?*

The great and splendid views of the future, which were laid open before the prophets of the Old Testament in a manner of which we find no example in the religious history of other nations, have been considered as at most nothing more than predictions, the application of which was a secret, until the time of their fulfilment arrived; and hence, of doubtful value as regards the particular age to which they belong.† This however seems not to have been the case. On the other hand, they were genuine and real preparations for the kingdom of God which was to be established by the Messiah, and were adapted to exert a healthful, moral and religious influence upon the contemporaries of the prophets themselves;‡ we will en-

* Jesus must have considered what is said respecting the mission of Jonah to the Ninevites and the effects of his preaching, as genuine history; for he could not possibly have expected his guilty contemporaries to receive a rebuke in the day of judgement from fabulous persons,—from a fable, Matt. 12: 41.

† Ammon, *Bibl. Theol.* II. *Einleitung*, S. 32.

‡ Some remarks are made upon this subject, though it is by no means exhausted, in Stäudlin's *Geschichte der Sittenlehre Jesu*, I. 321—331; and Hengstenberg's *Christologie*, I. 1. 16—18.

deavor to show mainly in what respects. And in the first place, predictions of the ultimate approach of a better, more perfect and happier age, must have awakened lively feelings of the spiritual misery of the ages to which they severally belonged; and hence, have produced a clear consciousness of the peculiar guilt and corruption of the nation. All the descriptions given of a new generation to be raised up which should be more righteous, pious and pleasing in the sight of God, were likewise so many testimonies against the living one, and so many complaints of its deep moral corruption. Every internal and external want with which the nation was oppressed, was thus made to appear as the consequence of the vice prevalent, while all prospect of relief was founded upon the coming of a better generation. These ideal representations of the splendid state of things in prospect, however, were, at the same time, earnest admonitions for hastening this period, and consequently, for striving after perfection. Hence, they served as powerful excitements to thorough improvement, and must have been productive of so much greater effects in this respect from the positive assurance with which they were accompanied, of its being agreeable to the will of God, and of his directing all things to the accomplishment of this end; for with these predictions, the prophets actually connected exhortations, (Isa. 2: 5. 8: 13. LVIII. Jer. 3: 22. 31: 18, 22. Ezek. 16: 55.)* Farther, these predictions must also have served to extend purer and more honorable notions respecting God. They represented him as the almighty and benevolent ruler of the world; who exercised care over the heathen

* In regard to all these prophetic testimonies, in which the present and the future are so closely connected together, it is important to recollect, that in the Bible in general, they are founded upon the view which considered the whole nation, the existing generation together with the future, as one person;—a view which has a deep foundation and is to be met with in other-books than the Bible. For the classics upon this subject, vid. Plutarch, *De sera Num. vindicta*, T. VIII. particularly p. 213—217; comp. Wolf, *ad. Demosth. adv. Lept.* p. 230; Storr, *De Sensu Hist.* Not. 183, Op. Ac. I. 75—77.

nations as well as that of the Jews, and intended they should acknowledge and worship him as such ; and hence, by no means as a being who had selected one nation to be his chosen people forever, but who, on the other hand, might choose others in its stead. How directly opposed was all this to the inclinations of the Jews to consider themselves as God's favorites to the exclusion of all others ! How much it was calculated to humble their national pride ! How could the willingness of the future heathen to yield obedience to the calls of God, be laid before the obstinate nation which had rejected its ancient, and the true God, without exciting in it sensible emotions of shame ! Isa. 65: 1, 2. This was directly calculated to subdue its inimical and haughty feelings towards the heathen and create in it an esteem for them,—an esteem as the future people of God, and in general, to teach it to consider the history of the world in a religious aspect and view the hand of God in every thing that happened ; inasmuch as these prophecies were interwoven with the history of other nations. If we follow out this train of thought in respect to individuals, we shall find that particular prophecies exerted a particular and especial influence. The destruction of idolatry announced by the prophets with the strongest assurance as an event which would infallibly take place, exhibited the folly of those who gave themselves up to it, and was calculated to create a preponderance in opposition to the allurements by which heathenism, then clad in splendor and universally prevalent, might have blinded the single and weak nation of the Jews, as well as to animate true Israelites to remain faithful to their God, before whom all were one day to bend the knee. The description given of an age in which a spiritual worship of God was to take the place of the limited external worship then in vogue, and the nation to be guided by a childlike disposition and willing obedience instead of a servile submission and the law of bondage, was calculated to excite the nation even then to honor God with something more than sacrificial services,

and render him the worship of the heart,—to elevate it from the low state in which it then was, and lead it to strive after the noble relationship of the children of God. The prospect opened before the separated tribes of Judah and Israel of being ultimately united together again, (Isa. 11: 13. Jer. 3: 18,) was an admonition for them even then, to lay aside all hostility and forgive each other. No representation, however, was calculated to exert a holier and more effectual influence upon the contemporaries of the prophets than that given of the Messiah himself. In him, the highest consolations were presented to all, and the grace of God and forgiveness of sin, rendered certain. The prophecies uttered respecting him, constituted as it were a Gospel before any had been written by the Evangelists. They served to mitigate the chastising severities of the law by exhibiting the soothing consolations of divine compassion. Whenever the nation felt itself trodden down and treated with contempt, a belief in the promise of God to send them a Saviour by whom he was to continue the exercise of his authority over them, was calculated to raise the sinking courage of the desponding and preserve them against total degradation and despair. The representation given of the Messiah, however, was also adapted to exert sometimes a correcting, at others an animating influence upon individuals. It held up an example to kings and magistrates which should have shone before them, have reminded them of their duty and dignity, have guarded them against tyranny and injustice, and excited them to become the fathers of the nation. It exhibited to priests the sanctity of their office, in the person of the supreme and divine Priest, and rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and negligence in regard to the spiritual welfare of the people, (Ezek. xxxiv.) It furnished even the prophets with the archetype, which, in laying down their testimony for the truth and passing through the sufferings incidental to their calling, they were to strive to resemble, and in short was adapted to yield consolation and strength

to all the pious who had to struggle and suffer.—I do not say that the prophecies of the Old Testament produced these effects and impressions upon all, but that the prophecies themselves were calculated to produce them; and if only a few made use of these prophecies for this purpose, it was because of indolence and corruption. At all times, however, there certainly were those who read them with a spirit of deep inquiry, and by this means were excited to out-strip the age in which they lived. In the very commencement of the New Testament we find mention of some persons who were animated with the spirit of nobler hopes respecting the Messiah, (Luke 1: 74—79. 2: 30—32, 34, 35, 38,) and this fact renders it so much the more evident that these prophecies were as introductory labor to prepare the way for the kingdom of God.

Accordingly Christ found the idea of such a universal kingdom of God in the Old Testament,* and we know also that this fact was one of great importance to him. All that he taught and did, was in continuation of the Old Testament. His object was to complete what God had there begun. The annunciations of the prophetic writings were to him so many divine hints to which he accurately attended; so many predictions of what was absolutely to be done to him and by him. Hence, the most important problem he had to solve was the initiation of his disciples into that spirit of the Old Testament which referred exclusively to him, and thereby to furnish them with a key for rightly understanding the holy Scriptures and obtaining a knowledge of the unity of the divine plan laid down

* Hess, Lehre, Thaten und Schicksale unsers Herrn, II. 171. "Strictly speaking, our Lord never formed a plan. The great undertaking which was to be executed by him and his disciples (or rather by him alone, making use of his disciples as instruments,) was not one of his projecting, but one which he found already projected in the former course of things and the connexion of divine institutions and transactions, from the time of Abraham down to his own day. This plan lay spread out before him from its first germ to its final development and consummation. Having a knowledge of this sublime plan and his own destination to be its executor, it was altogether improper and superfluous for him to think of plans of his own."

in the Old Testament. That in making use of the Old Testament, Christ did not act from the full convictions of his own heart, but an endeavor to accommodate himself to the representations then prevalent and to the feelings of the nation in general, is one of the most groundless and objectionable opinions that have been advanced in modern times.* Not to speak of the impossibility always in the way of reconciling such an accommodation with a strict love of the truth; it may be asked, if Christ was not serious in every thing that he did, how he could have evinced such religious earnestness in considering himself under obligations to fulfil the Scriptures; how he could have thus censured his contemporaries for neglecting to attend to the testimony of the Scriptures, (John 5: 39, 46, 47;) how he could have taken such pains to instruct his disciples in the Scriptures; and how in his prayer to the Father, (John 17:12,) he could have gone so far as to appeal to the Scriptures?† The fact, however, that these early annunciations respecting the kingdom of God were already in existence, did not divest this thought of its originality in the mind of Jesus. There was one source from which it flowed both in regard to Jesus and the prophets themselves,—that of the same divine spirit. Jesus found himself, found his own spirit in the prophets; and instead of saying that Christ was indebted for his knowledge, to the prophets, we may say, if we believe the intimations of the New Testament (1 Pet. 1: 11,) that the prophets were indebted for their illumination to the spirit of Christ. To all this, however, it may be added, that though the prophets, speaking as the organs of God, cast many remote glances to this divine plan, yet none of them ever conceived the

* Semler, Von Untersuchung des Canon, I. 125 ff. 2e Ausg.

† The view which Jesus took and the manner in which he made use of the Old Testament, have been accurately and completely explained by Hess, l. c. Abschnitt, Nr. VIII; Ueber Verschiedenes, was zur Bildung seines Characters beigetragen, Th. II. S. 81—145; especially S. 40 f. 68 f. of the last edition, Theil 20e. of his collected works. Comp. also Cramer, Bibliologia N. T. L. 1819.

idea of carrying the plan itself into execution. This none of them could or ought to have done, as none of them had been called upon by God for the purpose. Jesus was the first one endowed with such power. He not only conceived the idea of the kingdom of God itself, but brought it to the realization. In him we discover a clear and decided resolution to perform this work and actually found a kingdom of God which should embrace the whole human family, as also positive evidence that he was conscious of having received a call from God to this effect. In this respect, he was resembled by none of his predecessors.

III. Not even by *John the Baptist*; for to him in the last place, have some endeavored to ascribe the honor of having formed the plan of a kingdom of God before Jesus. "Indeed it was he," say they, "who first led Jesus to think of it; for John having been put to death at an early period of his labors, Jesus completed the plan which the former had commenced, and then the church was called after him; so that there is the same relation between them as between Columbus and Americus."* Who would have rejected such honor as undeserved, sooner than John, whose chief ornament in the presence of Jesus, was deep humility? The whole supposition is nothing more than a crude, fanciful conceit, to prove which in a clear and convincing manner, resort is had in vain to genuine history. "John came forward at an *earlier* period, and was the *first* to announce the near approach of the kingdom of God." This was agreeable to his destination; for he was sent to prepare the way for the greater person who was to come after him, and *on this very account* he cannot have been what this latter person was to be. How can this latter, more exalted character have been first no-

* So the anonymous author of the essay, *Johannes u. Jesus*; in Henke's *Neues Magazin*, VI. 373—440. To this place belongs the first division as far as to p. 411, and then follows the second: *Ueber die Begriffe vom Messianischen Reiche*.

tified of his calling by John? The prophets made their appearance at a still earlier period. Are they therefore to be considered as the founders of the kingdom of God? The time does not determine the question. "But John was engaged in the same calling as Jesus; he preached the same kingdom of God, delivered the same serious and sacred instructions in regard to duty, and exhibited similar zeal for the truth and the thorough reformation of his people." He preached the kingdom of God which the prophets had spoken of long before, as very near, called Jesus the founder of it, and urged repentance as the only condition upon which any one could be admitted into this kingdom; but with the few hints left us respecting John's preaching, by what means shall we prove that his system of instruction was in every respect equal to Christ's? To do him justice, we must acknowledge his moral greatness, but are we authorised to place him on an equality with Jesus? "John's school rivalled that of Christ, and continued for a long time the sole opponent of the Christian church; a fact which betrays a suspicion that John himself expected at first to lay claim to the Messiahship," (S. 392, 397.) John had no school of his own, nor did he attach his disciples to his name. He educated them for the school of Christ, and pointed them to him. He had disciples indeed for some time after Christ entered upon his public career, but never received any censure from him for it. The reason is manifest. He was not an enemy to the latter but a friend, and engaged in promoting the same cause; and his disciples, on his decease, could join Christ's community. And that a particular sect arose after his death which assumed his name and exalted itself above Jesus, is not to be charged upon him,—for he had certainly been explicit enough in declaring that he had no intention of founding a community of his own.

The entire relation which existed between Jesus and John as clearly laid down by the Evangelists, is directly opposed to the gratuitous hypothesis in question. From the very commencement, John, as is evident from every

thing that he said and did, kept one uniform purpose before him. The calling to which he was destined had already been pointed out to him by the prophetic declarations of his father, with which he was certainly acquainted, (Luke 1: 76—79;) and that he ever thought of being able to become the Messiah, is directly opposed to his repeated and most public assertions, (John 1: 20. Luke 3: 16.) He knew that he was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, by exhortation to repentance and by pointing immediately to Jesus, who on being baptized was openly manifested to him as such; and to perform his commission in this respect, was made the business of his whole life. It was not with “sadness and passionate feelings,” (S. 400) but with evident joy, (John 3:29, 39) that he saw the increase of the Lord, and felt assured that hearts would apply to him. How, from the very commencement of his career did he humble himself before the exalted Jesus, and confess his own inferiority and unworthiness! He even went so far as to concede to Jesus an exclusively superhuman dignity, a heavenly origin, (John 3: 31—36,) and urge faith in him as an indispensable condition of salvation. How could John have done this in an honorable manner, if he had considered Jesus as his equal, and been the very means of first bringing him to a consciousness of his calling? And then from the unworthy accusation of the Fragmentist, (Fragment v. Zweck Jesu, S. 134, 135,) it would seem as if every thing that passed between Jesus and John had been the result of agreement and dissimulation! Impossible! The strict veracity of John compelled him not in appearance but in reality, to humble himself deeply before Jesus,—to humble himself, the son of earth, before the celestial Son of God! Notwithstanding the reverence which as Christians, we still owe him, we must upon his own testimony admit, that he had not the light and the perfect wisdom, that he could not claim for himself the holiness and purity which the Lamb of God must have possessed, (John 1: 29;) that he was destitute of the perfect spiritual freedom which the Saviour exhibited, (Matt. 9: 14. 11: 18 seq.) and never permit-

ted like him to baptize with the Holy Spirit. How is it possible for any one who reflects upon all this difference made by John in person between himself and Jesus, to think of forcing upon him an honor which his humble heart so earnestly strives to reject?*

And finally, how shall the hypothesis in question be reconciled with the conduct and character of Jesus? Where has Jesus uttered a single word giving us to understand that he was indebted to John for any thing? It is true that he presented himself to John for baptism. He did so, however, in order, in a manner agreeable to the divine will, to attest the coming of the kingdom of God, and especially for the purpose of being made known to John as the Messiah. He appealed to the testimony of John, but not because he needed it, but for the sake of contemporaries (John 5: 34.) On the other hand, how far above John does Jesus represent himself! He recognises John only as the messenger sent before him to prepare his way, and accordingly, as his servant, (Matt. 11: 10.;) and even says "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," v. 11. Not that every professor of Christ and every herald of the Gospel excels John in personal worth. This is incredible. But that he who should live and labor in the kingdom of God when actually founded, would be in a more spiritual condition; inasmuch as he would have more sources of knowledge and enjoy greater means of grace, than John;† whence we see again what impor-

* In this place, compare Ammon's sermon: "John the Baptist, a teacher of virtue without faith;" in the Sermons, Ueber Jesum und s. Lehre, I. 135—156; though it must be allowed that he here gives too unfavorable a representation of John; as Jesus did not consider the question which John proposed to him in such a trying state of mind as every good man has sometimes to encounter, as the result of a complete surrender of faith, or even of a hesitancy, (Matt. 11: 7, extr.;) for on the other hand, he afterwards recognised him as the true successor of the ancient Elias, (Matt. 17: 12,) and one who, had been obliged to encounter similar internal difficulties; Rom. 11: 2, 3.

† The explanation which Chrysostom, Luther, Zuinglius, Calovius and the late writers, Menken, Betrachtungen über das Ev. M. II.

tance Jesus attached to himself and kingdom, when brought in comparison with John. How could Jesus have done so, had John excelled him in any thing, and been the first to call his attention to the kingdom of heaven?

E. pp. 89, 252.

Whether Jesus received his education and his principles, from the school of the Essenes.

AMONG all the attempts that have been made to deduce the education of Jesus and his principles from a definite source, perhaps no one has assumed such an appearance of probability or tended more to dazzle, than that to deduce them from the Essenes. Of this hypothesis, of which it seems proper here, in the first place, to give a short literary history, Voltaire and Frederic II. are commonly considered as the authors.* The former, however, does not state it as his opinion but that of some learned men, that Jesus was an Essene.† It is highly

232 ff. ; Fritzsche, on this passage ; and Fleck, De regno div. p. 83, have given of Matth. 11: 11, that by the *least in the kingdom of heaven* Christ understood himself, does not seem to be appropriate. One who is in this kingdom is a citizen and subject at the same time, but not the king of the kingdom. Christ in other places calls the members of his kingdom *little* ; Matt. 10: 42. 18: 6. comp. Luke 12: 32. The explanation of *μετῶν* adopted above, is agreeable to the usages of the language. Comp. Storr, Ueber den Zweck des Johannes, S. 459 ff. on John XIV, 23. The actual truth of the passage was especially and gloriously confirmed by the apostles, as they accomplished more in the kingdom of Christ than John was able to do.

* Ammon has alluded to this in the *Bibl. Theologie*, II. 300, and his allusions in this case, as in others, have passed over into several works.

† In the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, sub v. *Esséniens*, *Oeuvres des Deuxp.* T. 57. p. 229. "Quelques savans ont crû, que J. C. était un de ces Esséniens, qui fuyaient le tumulte des affaires et qui cultivaient en paix la vertu."

probable that Voltaire received it from England as he did most of his Rationalistic wisdom. That the Deists of this country, as early as the beginning of the 18th century, maintained Christianity to have had its origin among the Essenes, is shown by Prideaux.* Indeed there are allusions to this fact in Bolingbroke,† from whose works and oral communications Voltaire appropriated so much to himself. At the same time, however, if not still earlier, John George Wachter a German scholar, distinguished for his various acquisitions, but somewhat notorious also for his paradoxes, attempted, in an investigation instituted for the express purpose, to represent Essenism as the source of Christianity. The work upon the subject which belongs to this place, *De Primordiis Christianae Religionis libri duo: quorum prior agit de Essaeis, Christianorum inchoatoribus, alter De Christianis Essaeorum Posteris*, is extant indeed only in manuscript; but Brucker has given a sufficient description of it accompanied with an abstract.‡ This same opinion is ascribed

* In the *Connexion*, II. 449, German transl. by Titel. [Eng. ed. Lond., 1808, Vol. III. p. 429 seqq. Tr.]

† The *Philosophical Works*, II. 310, of the quarto ed. He finds much as he supposes of an Essene character, especially in the Sermon on the mount.

‡ In the 6th or supplementary volume of the *Hist. Crit. Philos.* p. 445—452. Wachter lived from 1673 to 1757, at last, in Leipzig, and received a considerable pension from the Leipzig magistrate, in whose library under Wachter's Manuscripts, the above is probably to be found. A copy of this work belongs to that part of the university library formerly in this place [Witten.] which bears the name of Von Ponickau, and it agrees in every respect with Brucker's description. It consists of 84 tolerably closely written quarto pages, and contains almost every thing that has lately been said in support of the hypothesis in question. Wachter, however, in what he says, does by no means intend to encroach upon the divine authority of Jesus. His words, § 29, "An Iesus fuerit Essaeus, aut moribus et doctrina Essaeorum institutus?" p. 39, MS. Witt., are as follows: "Constat, Iesum pro aetate sapientia et doctrina profecisse, Luc. 2: 52, ut solent omnes prophetae in pueritia 1 Sam. 2: 26. Et tamen hoc nusquam scriptum esset, omnes tamen intelligerent, Divinitatem non impertire dotes suas humanae naturae simul et semel, sed praeceptoribus et exemplis ad nos formandos uti. Hoc ergo supposito inquirendum nunc est, cuius Sectae discipulus fuerit Iesus?"

APPENDIX, E.

to the Jesuits;* and it has also been defended by many Free-masons in connexion with the supposition that their

Fuerunt autem circa tempora Iesu quatuor tantum in universa Iudaea docentium et discentium scholae; Pharisaeorum, Sadducaeorum, Essaeorum, et Sicariorum. De prima aut secunda Iesum fuisse, nemo, opinor, dixerit. Nam Pharisaeos et Saducaeos, eorumque mores, dogmata et instituta, Iesum palam damnavit. De postrema idem sentiendum. Nam Caesarem Iesus agnovit, eidemque tanquam Domino obedientiam et censum praestandum dixit. Matt. 22: 21. Restat ergo, ut fuerit de Schola Essaeorum, quia de aliqua illum schola fuisse necesse est. Et decebat sane Servatorem mundi optimos et sapientissimos gentis suae viros habuisse praeceptores, quales omnino erant Essaei." On another page, however, in the Conclusio Operis, § 54, p. 83s. MS., it is said again: "Ex antecedentibus manifestum est, Christianam Religionem non subito aut improvise venisse in mundum, ut Palladium aut Ancile de caelo lapsum, sicut vulgus hominum existimat: sed omnino per causas secundas a divina providentia e longinquo praeparatas, paulatim ad res humanas demissas esse, adeo, ut origo eius et progressus sciri et cognosci possit. Nos enim, si verum dicere fas est, *Iudaica Secta* sumus, nec aliunde quam ex celebri Essaeorum ordine oriundi. Hi sunt illi *pauperes*, quibus Evangelium primum annunciatum est. Luc. 7: 22. Matt. 11: 6. Ab his ad primitivos Christianos promanavit *Communio bonorum, abstinencia a militia, sacramentum religionis, jejunia, noctes feriatae, hymni, preces ad orientem, hierarchia et cultus angelorum, disciplina ecclesiastica, monachismus, et universus, sc. sacram interpretandi modus allegoricus*. Quae cum ita sint, perspicuum est, Essaeos Christianorum inchoatores, et Christianos Essaeorum posteros esse. Huc procul dubio digitum intendit Lactantius dum, l. V. c. 23, ait: *Nos Christianos Iudaeorum successores et posteros esse*. Quorum autem Iudaeorum? Certe non Pharisaeorum aut Saducaeorum. Quid enim Christiano generi cum illis commune? Igitur Essaeorum. Quod suscepimus demonstrandum." In the conclusion we find the following remarks: "Hunc tractatum fecit an. 1713, refecit 1716, tandemque multis accessionibus auctum in presentem ordinem digessit an. 1717, I. G. W." From the words quoted, it will be inferred, that Wachter has taken up with many things in his proof which are altogether untenable, and some of these have already been censured by Brucker; as for instance, (§ 27, p. 37, MS.) that those pronounced *righteous* in the New Testament, Matt. 10: 41, were Essenes; as Joseph, Matt. 1: 19; Simeon, Luke 2: 25; Joseph, Acts 1: 23;—that the *way of righteousness*, Matt. 21: 32, means the sect of the Essenes, and others. In the mean time, however, he has omitted nothing, which goes to show that there is a resemblance between Essenism and Christianity.

* Frh. von Wedekind, Der pythagor. Orden, die obscurantenver-eine und die Fr. Maurerei, L. 1820, S. 104, says: "Every Friday-afternoon the Jesuits held secret chapters and attended to the culti-

order likewise sprung from the Essenes.* Not to mention other writers of less importance,† however, it may be added that this opinion has found its most skillful advocate in Stäudlin, who, (*Geschichte der Sittenlehre Jesu*, I. 570—582,) declares it probable, “that Jesus spent his childhood among the Essenes and received his education and instruction from them until he became a young man; and then was pitched upon by the order to effect a great moral revolution and sent forth upon the execution of the commission.” There are so many weighty arguments, however, to be brought forward in opposition to this opinion that it can hardly be looked upon by any one as tenable.‡ As Reinhard has said but little about it, though very excellent, I shall here give a condensed survey of the considerations by which it is opposed.

vation of their esoteric doctrines, as to which they are said (as I think I know from good authority,) to consider themselves as the successors of the Essenes, from which sect they believe that Christ received his education, having been formed by it for the express purpose of the order (the Essenes and afterwards the Jesuits.”)

* Ragotzky, *Der Freidenker in der Maurerei*, Berlin, 1793, S. 183—192; Cöthner, *Taschenbuch für Fr. Maurerei*, 1800, S. 219—228; comp. Lenning, *Encyclopädie der F. M.*, Art. *Essenes*, I. 162—193.

† Riem, *Christus u. die Vernunft*, S. 668—706; Richter, *Das Christenthum u. die ältesten Religionen des Orients*, S. 243 ff.; *Der Zweck Jesu geschichtlich und seelkundlich dargestellt*, S. 45—47. 64.

‡ This opinion has been contested since Lüderwald by Bengel, *Flatt's Magazin*, VII. 126—180; Ammon, *Religiöse Moral*, Göttingen, 1800, S. 72 f.; *Bibl. Theol.* II. 300 ff.; Thiess, *N. Krit. Kommentar*, II. 408; *Eelkonis Tinguæ*, *Oratio de I. C. doctore Θεοδιδάκτω*, minime Esseno, Groening., 1805; Von Meyer's *Ehrenfrieds Lehrabende*, Erste Fortsetz., Frankf., 1803, 1—104; “Jesus self-taught;” Bandelin, *Ueber die Bildung des grossen Propheten von Nazareth zum ersten Religionslehrer auf Gottes Erde*, Lüb., 1809; Planck, *Geschichte des Christenthums in d. Periode s. ersten Einführung*, I. 57—67. Among Masons, Mörlin has opposed it in the well written letters, *Ueber den Bund der Essäer*, im *Altenburgs. Journ. f. Freimaurerei*, B. II. Heft 1 and 2, of which the two last letters belong to this place; extracts from which are to be found in Lenning's *Encyclopädie*, I. 186—193, and Fichte's *Anweisung zum seligen Leben*, S. 347 f.

I. *The proofs in favor of this hypothesis are unsatisfactory.* "It is thought to afford a satisfactory explanation of the disappearance of Jesus from the page of history between the 12th year and 30th of his life." The silence of the Evangelists respecting this period of Christ's life can be explained without any such hypothesis. Their principal object was to develop that part of Christ's public life in which he appeared and acted as a Saviour, and not to write annals, there being nothing which required them to do so. Besides, during this period, he lived in obscurity away from the view of the world, without rashly making himself public. How can it seem strange to us that the Evangelists have said nothing of these years? Admit that Jesus did not spend them in Nazareth, we have as much right to suppose that he grew up in some other favorite place. "Even Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. II. 17,) considers the Therapeutae as Christians; a fact which betrays the great similarity which existed between the Essenes and Christians." Not between them and Christians in their original simplicity, but the later Christian ascetics and monks. The marks which Philo found among the Therapeutae were not those of the Christian faith, but the Jewish.* Eusebius was seduced by his anxiety to find early traces of Christianity, to discover them in a place to which it could scarcely have been extended at the time when Philo wrote. "Jesus opposed the Pharisees and Sadducees, but never said a word against the Essenes. They are never mentioned by way of censure in the New Testament. May not Jesus himself have belonged to this sect?" Jesus belonged to no sect. He was exalted above all sectarian distinctions. He never spoke in direct terms against the Essenes because no occasion presented for him to do so. In the cities, markets, syna-

* Schröckh, K. G. II. 103. [Comp. Prideaux's *Connexion*, Vol. III. p. 427. "The words of Philo," says he, which are quoted at large in some preceding sections, "manifestly prove, *first*, that these Therapeutae could not be Christians, and *secondly*, that they were most certainly Jews." Tr.]

gogues, and the temple, where he taught, there were no Essenes to be met with. They never rose up in hostility against him. In this respect his words, "He that is not against us is for us," Luke 9: 50, may be considered as true of them. "Essenism and Christianity bear a great resemblance to each other. Both are moral religious fraternities." Of very different kinds, however; and there was a church even in the Old Testament. "In both a community of goods was introduced." Not in the church universally, but only among Christians in the church at Jerusalem, and there, as a voluntary thing for temporary and local reasons, and not because it was enjoined by any command from Christ or his apostles, or any law of general obligation; whereas the Essenes made the renunciation of all property an indispensable condition of admission into their fraternity. In all other churches each one retained his own property, with reference to which, many directions are given, and on the universal extension of Christianity, every thing like a community of goods immediately ceased. "The regulations of both fraternities respecting the worship of God are very much alike." The resemblance springs from a common source, the synagogue, the regulations of which, Christians, who had received no liturgical precepts from Jesus, were at liberty to imitate so far as appropriate to their purpose. "Many of their moral principles agree; as for instance, those of love to God and one's neighbour, of fraternal equality, of oaths, and of celibacy." They are either contained in the Old Testament, as the first for instance, or else they are quite dissimilar. Among the Essenes there were four orders of different degrees, between which there was such a distance, that one of a higher class considered himself as defiled if touched by one of a lower class, and washed himself as if he had rendered himself common by associating with a total stranger, (Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.* II. 8: 10.) The oath in Christianity is disapproved of, but not absolutely forbidden. The Essenes, on the other hand, required those who were to be initiated into their fraternity, to take a

horrible oath. The regulations also of the Christian church respecting marriage are unlike those of the Essenes, for the former do by no means absolutely enjoin a state of celibacy; on the other hand, they exhibit the sanctity of marriage in a religious point of view.

II. *There is an essential difference between Essenism and Christianity.* The spirit of Christianity is pure, free, and painfully confined down to no narrow forms. It leaves each individual to make choice of his own external exercises and urges upon him nothing more than internal sanctity of heart. Essenism was slavishly confined to stated forms. It produced a kind of monkish piety and debased the mind. "Its pupils in their dress and the management of their bodies, resembled children who act under the influence of a fear of their masters," (Josephus, De B. I. II. 8. 4.) The Sabbath was observed with more than Pharisaical punctiliousness, washing before meals was most strictly attended to, and anointing with oil and the use of wine was prohibited under severe penalties. How far is Christianity elevated above these merely external exercises! Christ explains the command respecting the Sabbath as subordinate to higher purposes, permits innocent enjoyments, and makes devotion subservient to the promotion of a happy spirit. Essenism in regard to its entire form and institutions is nothing but Separatism. It draws its followers away from the world, forbids the extension of the secret principles of the order and makes virtue the property of a few initiated persons. Christianity extends infinitely beyond the boundaries of this narrow horizon and is in every respect of a universal character. It directs its followers while in the world to act for the world, requires them to preach the truth as the common property of mankind, upon the house-tops, and aims as far as possible at connecting all together for the purpose of mutually improving the heart. Essenism was the affair of an order, which contracted the heart; Christianity is an affair of mankind and it enlarges the heart. There is a difference also between the

two in regard to single doctrines, as the Essenes admit, the doctrine of a fate by which the destinies of all are predetermined, thus opposing the idea of human freedom, and also admit the immortality of the soul, but deny the resurrection of the body.

III. *There are many historical circumstances directly opposed to the hypothesis in question.* Not one of the ancient writers who speak of Christ and of Christians, reckons them among the Essenes. Josephus, who had acquired his information of the latter not from foreign accounts but from actual experience, having been through their school as also those of the other sects, (De vita sua, c. 2,) would certainly have known it, had the founder of Christianity which was then well known and very extensively spread abroad, been educated in this school. Would he both in his description of the sects, and in his account of Jesus and of John, (whom we must then also consider as an Essene) have altogether passed over this circumstance? Would he not, on the other hand, have observed that the Christian party originated with the Essenes? If this, however, was the case, and Jesus labored only for the cause of the Essenes, how comes it to pass, that they took no interest in his cause? That they did not pass over to the church of Jesus in which they saw the sublime object so vigorously advanced? Instead of doing so, they continued a distinct sect until the total destruction of their native country, when their society was probably dissolved. Some individuals of them may have been admitted into the Christian church, but it is evident that Paul must have guarded against the errors thus introduced. Had Christ himself been an instrument of the Essenes, he would in all probability have had such persons for assistants as agreed with him in principles. He chose none, however, from among the Essenes. The persons whom he chose for his apostles and by whom without any support from others, the Gospel was to be spread, were ignorant Galileans and evidently did not belong to the school of the Essenes. How can it be ac-

counted for that the apostles never give the least intimation of Christ's having been connected with the Essenes? Is it supposable that they have designedly passed over the thing in silence, for the purpose of procuring for their Lord the honor of a higher education and a superior message? They were too unskilful and too honest to descend to such a crafty measure. And would they have been totally ignorant of any thing of the kind? when we consider how familiarly they lived with Jesus, and how well acquainted they were with his most intimate associates, such a supposition becomes incredible. Their silence at least affords room for a doubt respecting the hypothesis in question. But farther: They indirectly contradict it, as they tell us that Jesus spent the years of his life before he made his appearance in public, in no other place than at Nazareth, where he was brought up, (Luke 14: 16;) a place, (Matt. 4: 13, comp. 2: 23,) which he did not leave until he entered upon his ministry. The inhabitants of Nazareth knew him well as their countryman, (Matt. 13: 54—57. Luke 4: 22—24. John 6: 42,) and were ignorant of his ever having been absent for a long time in some educational institution. On the other hand, they asserted with great positiveness that he had not studied in any human school, (John 7: 15,) and, on that very account, were astonished at his wisdom and oratorical powers. Had Jesus been in a school a long time for the purpose of attending to this kind of learning, the inhabitants of Nazareth, particularly his relatives, would certainly have known it. He would not have struck them as being so humble a character nor have appeared to them so much like an equal. His education would no longer have remained to them a mystery.* That the Jews in general, particularly those in Jerusalem, did not look upon him as an Essene, is evident from the fact that Jesus was never interdicted from entering the

* Well worth reading upon this subject, is Reinhard's sermon, entitled, "A glance at the domestic life of Jesus," 1802, I. Nr. 3, upon John 2: 1—11.

temple, whereas Josephus says, (Archaeol. XVIII. 1. 5,) that the Essenes were excluded from the common court of the temple.

IV. To these historical reasons may be added a reason decidedly moral. *The hypothesis in question is directly opposed to the character of Jesus Christ.* If Jesus had received his wisdom, and an idea of his great work from a man or from a human institution, gratitude and veracity would have required him to make it known. Instead of doing so, Jesus denies that his work had any human origin, and admits the agency of no one in the business but his heavenly Father, upon whose commission alone he acted.* He therefore who, notwithstanding all this, conjectures that Jesus received his education and his call from a human source, must bring his love of veracity in question and throw an obscurity over his character. He who goes thus to work, does no service to mankind or the public authority of religion.† The purity and uprightness of Jesus, therefore, constrain us absolutely to reject an opinion with which they cannot be reconciled.‡

* Classical upon this subject is the sufficiently regarded and irrefutable work of Süsskind: "In what sense did Jesus maintain the divinity of his moral and religious doctrines?" (In welchem Sinne hat Jesus die Göttlichkeit s. Religions-u. Sittenlehre behauptet?) Tüb., 1802. With this Gelbke seems not to be acquainted in the work: Jesus von sich, ein Beitrag zur Stärkung des Glaubens an ihn, L., 1829, the first division of which from p. 8 to 37, belongs to this place; though in respect to fundamental exegesis, it will be necessary to supply its defects out of Süsskind.

† Mörlin at the place quoted. "An acute genius by resorting to fiction and availing himself of the aid of such an hypothesis, might indeed clear up much that is obscure in the history of Jesus and his apostles, but by so doing, he would I fear veil *the character of Jesus* with a thick shadow,—that very point from which light and life stream forth upon the whole. Jesus forbade his disciples from having any thing to do with mysterious institutions and even declared, John 18: 19—21, that he himself had never done his work in secret corners. The history of the world becomes vastly poorer if divested of the purity and integrity of this worthy character."

‡ Fichte at the place quoted, "Jesus did not receive his doctrines from external sources,—from tradition; for from the truly exalted frankness and integrity by which his words and actions were always dis-

F.

A critical examination of the objections which have been made to the legitimacy of Reinhard's conclusion.

I. The present work of Reinhard is distinguished to a high degree for clearness, lucid order, and a logical connexion; excellencies which all his works possess. The plan of it is simple and to be looked through at a glance.* "Jesus conceived the idea of a kingdom of God,—he alone, no one had done it before him;—he conceived this idea, a thing which presupposes the highest cultivation of the intellect and heart, and did it under circumstances which will not account for the perfection to which he attained in this respect; and therefore, he must have been prepared in an extraordinary manner and destined by God for this express purpose." This is the train of thought, and it is so clearly developed and so closely connected, that it cannot easily fail to produce its effect upon the reader. The conclusion drawn from the preceding considerations, however, has been subjected to different attacks. Offence has, in the first place, been taken at the position, *that Jesus himself devised a plan*. "It is fundamentally wrong," says Kleuker,† "to consider Christ as having done what he did upon earth by way of executing a plan which he himself devised. He undertook nothing but the execution of a divine plan, which had been devised and definitely fixed before

tinguished it is evident, that in this case, he would have told of it, and pointed his own disciples to these same sources,—in saying which to my reader, I suppose him by his own relationship to such virtue and a deep study of the biography of Jesus, to have obtained a clear comprehension of the integrity which he possessed."

* According to Böttiger's *Zeichnung von Reinhard*, S. 33, comp. 51, Note 46, no one has more finely apprehended or more correctly estimated Reinhard's plan than Blessig, *Sur l'influence de la relig. protest.*—*Sermon de R.*—avec une notice sur Reinhard, Strasb., 1808, p. 50—55.

† *Johannes, Petrus und Paulus als Christologen*, S. 109—111.

the foundation of the world. It is as the performer of the great work for the completion of which he had been endowed with full power by the will of his heavenly father, and not as a plan-deviser that he merits the confidence of mankind in life and in death." Such also was the opinion of J. A. Weise,* of an anonymous writer to every particular,† and finally of the worthy veteran, Bishop J. Michael von Sailer:‡ "The expression, *Jesus devised an all-comprehensive plan*, has a signification which not only contradicts the testimony of history, but most directly detracts from the impression that we have of divinity; for Jesus constantly affirms that the plan the execution of which he had before him was not his, but his Father's, by whose decision he had been set at work, and under whose commission he was laboring." These objections however, appear to have originated in misapprehension, and may

* Christenthum auf Geschichte fest gegründet, Gera, 1788, Vorr. S. XVIII. f. "Indeed Ernesti speaks of imputing the formation of plans and engaging in projects, to the blessed God, with censure, and often with aversion; as God forms determinations, and resolves upon the happiness of mankind, but never projects plans as men do. Nor more did Jesus as the founder of Christianity meddle with plans during his sojourn on earth. To seek for the divinity of Christianity in a plan the invention and execution of which appear to excel the possibility of all human wisdom, leads to pure delusion and deception. To do so, is plausibly to deceive and delude, and it can easily be shown that Reinhard in his plan deceives both himself and others without intending to do so."

† Alternative über das Resultat der Reinh. Schrift, in Augusti's Theolog. Monathsschrift, 1801, St. 1. S. 40—51. "Jesus never spoke of the plan as his, but only as his Father's. This is evident from all the Evangelists, especially from John. He who denies it, must deny all the historical credibility of these men and exalt Jesus at the expense of truth. By this means, many a hot-headed genius may be impelled on to similar undertakings, and in the deficiency of his own powers call on God in vain for assistance, having altogether mistaken his duty."

‡ In his excellent work: Grundlehren der Religion, 1ste A. München, 1805, S. 209—212, in the 2n A. 1814, S. 278—282; Jacobi in his Briefwechsel, II. 459, considers this book "as the best of this distinguished man's productions and in general one of the best in the German language." Comp. also the same, S. 54, the opinion expressed respecting Sailer's Glückseligkeitslehre.

easily be explained away ; for the object that Reinhard had in view, was to show, that the plan which we find with Jesus was not the work of a man but of God ; and that, as Jesus had been raised up and educated by God for the express purpose of its execution, he must have possessed the highest authority as a divine messenger. Had Reinhard actually formed a conception of this plan as one that had been devised and prosecuted by Jesus after the manner of men, he would indeed have uttered the most striking inconsistency. Reinhard does indeed speak in his premises as if this plan had been devised by Jesus himself, but he does so because he was not at liberty to assume as proved what he was about to prove ; namely, that it was the plan of God. If in addition to this it should be objected, that the author speaks of a plan devised by Jesus, upon the very title page,* it would relate only to the phraseology there employed, and Reinhard would readily subscribe to the whole of what Sailer has said, in the place quoted, S. 281 f. “ In order to make the contents of this work more agreeable to me, I translate it into different language, such as follows : ‘ The mind of Jesus contained the great idea of founding a kingdom of God upon earth which should comprehend all ages and nations and be the means of effecting the salvation of the world ; and this great idea was contained in no mind but his, and was as distinct from all others in the manner of its execution, as it was in its character ; and this in every respect unique idea evidently bears the splendid impress of divinity ; and this evidently divine idea exhibits its divine origin with still more clearness when we take into consideration the manner in which human nature is developed in general, and the time and circumstances in which Jesus made his appearance.

Now this very thing is the highest seal of the mission of Jesus, showing, that he did not come into the world to do

* [The word *devised* belongs to the German title, as also the phrase quoted on the top of page 276. Tr.]

his own will or to execute his own plan. Being one with the Father, he taught only his word and performed only his will.”

With this solution before us, all inconsistencies vanish of their own accord, and with them, the very suspicion that Christ's undertaking may allure other minds falsely and capriciously to imitate him.

II. Very important are the objections which have been made to Reinhard's concluding position. If we admit all the greatness and exaltation of Christ's plan, says one, it will not thence follow that he was educated by God for this purpose solely in a supernatural and extraordinary way. It is possible to conceive of a natural course of education which would be sufficient to enable Jesus to become what he actually did.* In accordance with this remark, men early made attempts to deduce the formation of Christ's powers from external sources of very different kinds.† Finding however that these attempts proved unsatisfactory, they assumed an intellectual self-education for Jesus.‡ In so doing however they sometimes lost sight of historical truth, at others, went beyond the bounds of modesty, and a reverence for the Scriptures; for it is difficult for him to avoid the accusation of arrogance, who, with a kind of boldness, persists in efforts to crowd himself into the secret history of Christ's soul and exhibit the causes to which he was indebted for its peculiarity. Should the interest of the historical investigator demand

* So also the reviews of Reinhard in the Hall. Journal f. Prediger, XXXVI. 246—248 Gabler, Neuestes Theol. Journal, III. 35—42; Röhr, Briefe, S. 143 ff. 181 f.

† To the late attempts of this kind, may now be added, what is asserted in the codex of John's Gospel described by Münster, vid. Münster, Notitia Codicis Graeci, Evangelium Johannis variatum continentis, Haun. 1828; where Jesus is said to have been instructed by the Egyptians or Hellenes. S. 31, ad c. VI. 42, it is said: *μηπως καθοτι κατοικησεν παρα των Ελληνων, ερχεται ομιλειν προς ημας ουτως τι κοινον εστι, απερ ειδαχθη παρα τοις Αιγυπτιοις, και απερ οι πατερες ημων ειδαξαν ημας.* At c. VI. 70, 71, *δωσω υμιν την δυναμιν ην ελαβον — εν τω ναω όπου διατηρεται ο αρτος της αιωνιου σοφιας.* At. c. VII. 16, *μη μεμαθηκως ει μη τα γραμματα των Ελληνων.*

‡ Greiling in Henke's Museum, II. 2. 297—341.



such an inquiry, still it should not be forgotten, that the moral-religious interest to be kept in view is far more important, and hence, the first question to be asked is, whether this will gain or lose thereby. In general, the mode of proceeding derived from Spinozistic principles, to reduce every thing in Christianity back again as far as possible to nature, rigidly applied, cannot be demanded as a requisite to a religious mode of thinking; as its application, instead of bringing God nearer to the heart, places God farther and farther out of view. To examine in this place all the experiments that have been made respecting the education of Jesus, would lead us too far. In our opinion they are all unsatisfactory and will always remain so, because they all lead to the error, that a man is obliged on the one hand, to invent means for effecting the mental education of Jesus which are not authorized by historical proof, and to over-estimate their effects; or, on the other, to diminish the *great* and *incomparable* of which Jesus was exclusively possessed and bring them nearer to a common standard. Now, though we should admit it to be impossible to give an apodictical demonstration of the wonderful education of Jesus, a thing which can seldom be done in historical matters, yet the supposition that Jesus was expressly furnished by God in the natural way with an education and a preparation of soul for the work which he undertook, superior to every thing common among men, would justify the conclusion, that God had destined even this Jesus for something peculiar and extraordinary; and for what but to become the teacher, guide, and spiritual head of mankind? The manner in which this influence of God was exerted upon Jesus, would not here come into the account. We have only to ask, what God intended to perform by means of Jesus? As what shall we recognise him? Now he who admits a divine preadaptation of all those circumstances which combined together to educate Jesus for his work, must also find in them an expression of the will of God indicating, that we are to look upon Jesus as the appropriate instrument of God and put unlimited confi-

dence in him as God's delegate. Should we refuse to accede to him that divine authority which binds our conscience the object which God agreeably to this supposition intended to accomplish by him, would be frustrated.

This historic-psychological way, however, is not the only one, in which Christ's divine mission can be deduced from his plan. It may also be deduced from it by means of a moral-religious consideration, and thus the force of Reinhard's proof be greatly increased.* It is not Christ's recognition and knowledge of the supreme Being which make him so unique and above all men worthy of reverence, but the purity and decision of his will in acting for this Being, (as, in general, all knowledge is impure and defective without a pure will.) Instead of asking therefore how Jesus acquired his knowledge of the supreme Being, and of the institution necessary for the salvation of mankind, we may inquire, whence did Jesus receive his call to found this institution and become a saviour? and in answer to it we say, that Jesus could not have considered himself called to engage in this work in merely a natural way, or by any thing short of an immediate revelation from God; as nothing else could justify him in attempting to become a Saviour of mankind. This follows from a general reason, and from a particular national one.

The duty to become the founder and head of an ethical-religious community or a church is not a duty common to all, (*officium commune*;) but a particular and personal one, (*officium singulare*;) that is, it is not a duty common to many or to all, but a duty which can belong to but one. If one has actually become the founder and head of a church, no other one can. Now to speak of

* I received the first hints as to taking this view of the subject, from one of my deceased teachers, Mr. Klotzsch, formerly professor in this place, in the course of some occasional remarks upon Reinhard's work.—I have since found the germ of it in Kant's *Relig.*, S. 141. 144, 2e A.

positive certainty, it is evident, that natural conscience cannot be sufficient to convince a man that this duty is incumbent upon him alone of all the millions of mankind ; for can this teach any one for certainty that he possesses exactly that measure of wisdom, which he must possess, who attempts to unite all men to one religious creed in common ? whether his strength has perfectly grown to that single, supreme duty ? whether his time and circumstances have been adapted and actually destined by God ? whether he has that moral superiority over all men that ever have been or are to be, which the founder of the church must have ? One is incapacitated from knowing all this in a natural way in exact proportion as he recognises the universal corruption of mankind which renders it impossible for any one to have an infallible knowledge of what lies within at the bottom of his own heart. He can not know but that a greater or better one will come after him, nor, if he is conscious of no higher connexion with God, of no immediate commission and call from God, be certain that God will not render another man as efficient by an extraordinary influence and mission, as he himself is merely the natural means. And further, how could he, directed by the natural information in his possession, presume to declare himself once for all the first and best guide of mankind, and all those who after him may assume this dignity, to be deceivers ? Without an immediate divine call there remains something arbitrary and presumptuous in announcing one's self, merely under the guidance of natural feelings, to be a founder of the church. Nothing but an immediate call from God and one the possibility of which is incontrovertible, can authorize a man to do any such thing. If we recognise Jesus as possessed of the clearest self-consciousness, the highest wisdom, and the most undoubted purity of will, then this dignity of his requires us to believe that he did not resolve to undertake and execute the magnificent work in question without being infallibly certain of the express will and commission of God in the case. In short, a call to

become the moral head of the whole human family, is one, the execution of which, for moral considerations, cannot be undertaken without an immediate command from God.

This reason derives strength from a national one applicable to Jesus. He in common with all the rest of his countrymen, believed in the high and extraordinary revelations of God. They were received by the prophets, and related in a great measure to the Messiah. If therefore Jesus believed that God intended to send the Messiah of the Old Testament, and by him found an eternal kingdom for the good of all men, and yet received no divine and miraculous intelligence in regard to his own person in this respect, this fact would have furnished him with sufficient proof that he himself had not been destined to become the Messiah; and if, nevertheless, he had undertaken the calling of the Messiah, he would have done it without any order and in opposition to the will of God. Christ's convictions of truth, therefore, derived as they were from the ancient prophecies, were of such a character as to lead us to the conclusion, that morally he could never have undertaken to found a kingdom of God upon earth without a high, and divine commission.

To deny that Jesus immediately received any such divine call, and make him have determined to become the Messiah from a heroic act of his own will, as well as to clothe what is thought to have passed at the same time in the interior of his own heart in romantic monologues,* is the right way to deduce the actions of Jesus from an enthusiastic exaltation or one less noble; to imagine him secretly ensnared in a fine self-deception;† and, at the bottom, to assume that one understands the internal springs of his life better than he did himself. When it comes to this pass, it is, as has long been admitted, self-evident, that nothing more can be said of that perfect self-

* Such an one is to be found in the *Briefe über d. Ration.*, S. 172—174, in every respect à la Bahrdt and Venturini.

† As Carus himself has done, *Psychologie der Hebräer*, S. 305.

resignation to Christ in which his word and work become binding upon the heart and conscience, and we put our confidence in him.* None can have faith in Jesus Christ but those who recognise him as a divine messenger; not in that vague sense in which any distinguished man may say, but in the only sense grounded upon the Sacred Scriptures and the testimony of Jesus himself. This is the only faith by which Christianity, the church, and religion, can be sustained among us.

* Plank points out this tendency of the new theology in a very excellent manner in the *Erste Amtsjahre des Pfarrers von S. Gött.*, 1823, S. 19. "The first theological teacher commenced his first lesson with declaring that he felt himself compelled to initiate us into nothing but pure and sublime Christianity. A new theology has arisen the advocates of which have finally with a bold hand torn away from Christianity, the veil in which for almost 18 centuries it had been inwrapped; "for," say they, "it can no longer be concealed that the time of believing in Christ has passed by."

ERRATA.

Page 121, 1st line, for THESE, read THERE.—Page 89, Note, 16th line, for C. read E.—Page 168, 21st line, read *Evemerus*.—Page 1, Note, 21st line, after y, insert 4te A.—Page 125, 15th line, before by, insert *up*.—Page 183, Note, 13th line, before Prideaux, insert [.







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